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ECCLESIAZUSÆ.

THE
ECCLESIAZUSÆ,
OR
FEMALE PARLIAMENT,

TRANSLATED FROM

ARISTOPHANES,

BY THE

REV. ROWLAND SMITH, M.A.

OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

"Our plot is a good plot, as ever was laid, our friends true and
"constant; a good plot, and full of expectation; an excellent plot."

HENRY IV.

OXFORD,

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1833.

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PREFACE.

THE difficulty of embodying in a modern language the force and spirit of the authors of antiquity, will be admitted by every one who is at all conversant with classical literature ; and that difficulty will be allowed to exist to a far greater extent, in the case of the great comic poet of ancient Greece. There occur in the pages of Aristophanes numerous allusions to persons and passing events of those times, too obscure to be known at the present day, as well as numerous jokes and “*jeux de mots*,” some of which cannot be transferred into any other language, while others are of so coarse a nature as to be totally unsuited to the refinement of modern times. Supposing these obstacles could be overcome, there will still remain for the translator the almost hopeless task of keeping pace with the poet in his ever-varying style : he is continually shifting from “grave to gay,” according as his object is to

convey a maxim of policy, to introduce a pun, or to deal a biting sarcasm ; at one time he^a rivals in his poetry the strains of the Tragic Muse, at another time, he descends to the utmost verge of broad comic license. In how great a degree these difficulties may nevertheless be surmounted, the labours of Mr. Mitchell have afforded ample proof ; who, rejecting the *dross* of the poet, has retained the *pure ore*, with greater success than can reasonably be expected from any less able scholar.

In making choice of this Play, the Translator has been chiefly influenced by the circumstance, that it has never before appeared in an English dress ; in addition to this, the graphic representation given of the popular assemblies of Athens cannot, he imagines, prove otherwise than interesting to the lovers of classical literature. The version will, he

^a Respecting his excellence as a poet, Schlegel says, “ In language and versification, his excellence is not barely acknowledged ; it is such as to entitle him to take his place among the first poets to whom Greece has given birth. In many passages of serious and earnest poetry which he has here and there introduced, Aristophanes shews himself to be a true poet, and capable, had he so chosen, of reaching the highest eminence even in the more dignified departments of his art.” *History of Dramatic Literature.*

trusts, be found upon the whole to be as accurate as the nature of the composition admits, making allowance for occasional alterations and omissions, the necessity of which must be apparent to every one who is acquainted with the original Play. It remains for him to express a hope, that in presenting to the public a first attempt at *translation*, he will meet with candour and indulgence.

Subjoined are Schlegel's remarks on the plot and general character of the Comedy.

“ The women steal in the dress of men into the
“ Assemblies of the people, and by means of the
“ majority of voices, which they have obtained in
“ this clandestine manner, they decree a new con-
“ stitution, in which there is to be a community of
“ goods and women. This is a satire on the ideal
“ Republics of the Philosophers, with such laws as
“ Protagoras before Plato had framed. The
“ Comedy appears to me to labour under the very
“ same fault with the “ Peace;” the introduction,
“ the secret assembly of the women, the rehearsal
“ of their parts as men, the counting of the popular
“ assembly, are all handled in the most masterly
“ manner; but towards the middle, the action
“ stands still. Nothing remains but the per-

“ plexities and confusion which arise from the
“ various communities, and from the prescribed
“ equality of rights in the love of the old and the
“ ugly, as well as of the young and the beautiful.
“ These perplexities are pleasing enough, but they
“ turn too much on a repetition of the same joke^b. ”

The time of this Drama is by Petitus assigned to the 4th year of the 96th Olympiad. Archonte Demonstrato. See note in Act I. Scene II.

^b History of Dramatic Literature, vol. i. page 216.

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THE
ECCLESIAZUSÆ.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PRAXAGORA.

ATHENIAN WOMEN.

BLEPHYRUS, Husband of Praxagora.

CHREMES } Friends of Blephyrus.
CITIZEN }

FIRST BURGHER.

SECOND BURGHER.

CHORUS of Athenian Women.

FEMALE CRIER.

THREE OLD WOMEN.

A YOUNG WOMAN.

A YOUNG MAN.

A MAID SERVANT.

A HOUSEHOLDER.

Scene, Athens.

ECCLESIAZUSÆ.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Scene lies in the suburbs of Athens. The time, an hour or two before dawn. Praxagora enters habited in male attire, and after suspending a large lamp in a conspicuous place, she thus apostrophizes it.

PRAXAGORA.

THOU^a offspring of the potter's plastic art,
Suspended now, whence best thy ray may shine,
(Homage and praise most justly are thy meed,
Since moulded by the whirling wheel, 'tis thine
To bear a kindred office with the sun,)
Beam forth thy brightest, be our signal bearer !
Not undeserving of the boon are we,
For thou art privy to our every act :

^a M. le Beau here remarks, that this speech of Praxagora is probably intended as a parody on those monologues of the tragic poets, in which they apostrophize, in pompous language, some inanimate being. *Mem. de Lett. de l'Acad. des Inscript. et Belles Lettres*, tome xxx.

Respecting the elegance and even magnificence of the ancient lamps, and the designs after which they were usually made, see Winckelman's " *Decouvertes faites a Herculanæum*," p. 74.

When in the service of the queen of love,
 We offer meetest incense at her shrine,
 O'er us is shed *thy* soft and chastened light ;
Thou at the mysteries of the toilet too,
 Welcome, dost aye preside ; nor is this all ;
 For if disposed to mirth and generous cheer,
 Our goodman's wine and garnered corn we filch,
 'Tis thine to shew the way, and tell no tales :
 For these good deeds, the counsels thou shalt share,
 Which at Minerva's^b feast, I and my friends
 Devised. But how is this, not one of all
 Who should assemble here is come, and yet
 Dawn fast approaches, and at break of day
 Th' Assembly meets, and we must take our seats ?
 Why this delay ? They surely can't have failed
 To get them all false beards, as was agreed on ?
 Or has the goodman caught them at his wardrobe,
 And marred their plot ? But lo ! e'en now a lamp
 Comes hitherward ; I'll step aside then, lest
 That which draws nigh turn out to be—a *man*.

[*She retires.*]

^b The *Σκίρα* or *Σκίρροφορία* was an anniversary solemnity at Athens, upon the twelfth day of Scirrophorion, in honour of Minerva. The name is derived from *Sciras*, a borough between Athens and Eleusis, where there was a temple dedicated to that goddess. See Potter, i. p. 490.

SCENE II.

FIRST WOMAN (*entering.*)

The hour is almost come ; the crier ^c gave
His second notice, as I left my door.

PRAXAGORA (*coming forward.*)

A weary watch, good dame, I've kept for you,
And have not closed an eye all night ; but come,
'Tis time our gossip here were roused, and soft
Must be the tap, lest I awake her lord.

[*She taps at a neighbouring door.*]SECOND WOMAN (*coming out.*)

When came your summons, I was drawing on
My sandals, nor have had a wink of sleep ;
My husband is a Salaminian, and
A *restless soul*, (you understand me,) so
'Twas but just now I filched away his suit.

FIRST WOMAN (*pointing.*)

Lo! of our complot, here come others three.

PRAXAGORA.

Marry now! mend your pace, for Glyce swore,
Whoe'er the last appeared, amerced should be,
Three jars of wine, and of chick-peas ^d a measure.

FIRST WOMAN.

Lo! too, Smicythion's wife, Melistice,

^c Le Fevre supposes the cock to be here meant by *κόκυξ*. See Potter, i. p. 109.

^d *ῥεῖβιδος*, chick-peas, which when parched served as provocatives to drinking.

Is hither speeding, she alone of all
Seems to have passed the night without disturbance.

SECOND WOMAN.

Ay, and Gusistrate, the tapster's wife,
Approaching you may see, with lamp in hand.

PRAXAGORA.

And many others now in sight appear,
Dames all of beauty, wealth, and high degree.

THIRD WOMAN (*entering, followed by many others.*)

To 'scape from my goodman was not so easy ;
He supped on sprats, and got an indigestion ;
So through the night 'twas nought but *cough, cough,*
cough !

PRAXAGORA.

Ladies! since those convened are duly met,
I pray ye all be seated. Say, has each
Done what was at Minerva's feast commanded ?

FIRST WOMAN (*raising her arm.*)

That sooth have I ; look at my arms, no lack
Of hair* you see ; moreover, when my husband
To market hied him, then well rubbed with oil,
From head to foot, I sunned' me through the day.

FIFTH WOMAN.

So too have I ; no more the razor's edge
My skin shall touch ; I've thrown it out of window,

* *Hispidæ membra quidem, et duræ per brachia setæ,
Promittunt atrocem animum.* Juv. Sat. ii. 11.

' It was the custom of the men to anoint the whole body with oil, and dry it in before the sun ; and of the women, to shave themselves all over. GRAY.

And soon shall rival e'en a bear in roughness.

PRAXAGORA.

Your *beards* too, have ye *them* as was commanded?

FOURTH WOMAN (*holding one up.*)

Lo mine! by Hecate, 'tis a bushy one.

FIFTH WOMAN.

And mine, which could Epicrates^s o'ershadow.

PRAXAGORA (*looking round.*)

Are all provided thus?

FOURTH WOMAN.

They are, they nod assent.

PRAXAGORA.

On other points I see ye're quite in keeping,
Staves, with Laconian^h shoes, and man's attire.

SIXTH WOMAN.

Lo! here's a club; I stole it, as he slept,
From Lamias.

PRAXAGORA.

And a goodly club, by Hecate!
To wield it long would make one—*puff* again.

SIXTH WOMAN.

And large enoughⁱ, by Jove, to have a code

^s Epicrates was remarkable for a bushy beard, when Plato, the comic poet, calls him *Σκισφόρος*, "the shield-bearer."

^h *Λακωνικά*, shoes worn by men, and of a red colour.

ⁱ Here occur in the original three lines, which appear to have set the commentators at defiance. The translator has adopted the sense given by Invernizius, who says, the passage refers to the form of the ancient staves and truncheons, which were either triangular or square, like the *ἄξονες* or *κίβητες*, on which were

Of laws engraven on its ample sides.

PRAXAGORA.

A truce to jests ; decide we, ere the stars
Fade into morning, what more's to be done,
Since earliest dawn will see th' Assembly meet.

FIRST WOMAN.

Behoves us make good speed then, and secure
Our seats, over against the stone tribunal ^k.

SEVENTH WOMAN.

See! like a thrifty wife, I've brought my wool,
And while th' Assembly fills, will ply my task.

PRAXAGORA.

Art mad ? what in th' Assembly ?

SEVENTH WOMAN.

Ay ; dost think

I cannot work and listen too ? How else,
By Dian, are my children to get clothing ?

PRAXAGORA.

Now hear her, how she talks of picking wool,
She whom befits to hide her form and sex !
A fine exposure would it be for us,
If you should come into the full Assembly,
And striding o'er the seats, should make a trip,
Then falling headlong, shew—you are a *woman* !
For fear of such mishap, we'll sit in front,

written the laws of Solon. See Robinson's *Antiquities of Greece*,
p. 97.

^k *Λίθες*, elsewhere called *βήμας*, the stone tribunal in the Pnyx,
whence the orators addressed the people.

There muffled up, we may defy detection ;
 For seated thus, with beard on chin, who'll dare
 Doubt each of us is every inch—a *man* ?
 Agyrrius¹, with the flowing beard of Pronomus,
 'Scaped every eye ; yet *he* was once a *woman* ;
 But now he rules the roast within our city.
 Then by the splendour of approaching dawn,
 Say, I adjure you, shall *we* fear to dare
 A deed, at which a wretch like him ne'er trembled ?
 Courage, good wives, for if we but succeed,
 And get the reins of power within our hands,
 Then may we hope to "*do the state some service*,"
 Whose wheels (be't now observed) are something
 rusty.

SEVENTH WOMAN.

How shall a conclave of weak women venture
 T' harangue in public ?

PRAXAGORA.

Nothing easier ;
 The regimen on which all eloquence
 Thrives best, they say, *Nature* to us prescribes.

SEVENTH WOMAN.

It *may* be so, yet fear I we shall blunder.

PRAXAGORA.

And for this very reason are we met,
 To rehearse, before we speak in downright earnest.
 But, without more ado, bind on your beards,
 Ye who intend to shew your skill in speaking.

¹ Agyrrius, an effeminate fellow, of scurvy reputation ; mention
 of whom is again made in page 15.

EIGHTH WOMAN.

Who dare suspect a *woman's* tongue can fail her ?

PRAXAGORA.

Then crown thee quickly, and stand forth *a man* ;
Myself will take a chaplet ^m too, in case
The subject call on *me* to try my powers.

SECOND WOMAN.

Now do but look, my dear Praxagora,
What strange fantastic figures we appear !

PRAXAGORA.

Fantastic, why ?

SECOND WOMAN.

Our beards, for all the world,
Shew like a string of roasted cuttle-fish ⁿ.

PRAXAGORA (*affecting dismay.*)

Ill-omened ° words ! quick call the purifier,
And bid him make lustration with a pig ;

▪ When speaking in the Assembly, it was customary to wear a chaplet. See *Thesm.* 388.

▪ We find as curious a simile in Shakespeare. *Quickly*, speaking of *Slender*, says,

“ Does he not wear a great round beard like a glover's paring
“ knife ? ”

Simple replies,

“ He hath but a little wee-face, with a little yellow beard ; a
“ cane-coloured beard.” *Merry Wives of Windsor.*

° According to Poinset, it was ill-omened to mention the cuttle-fish, because it produces a *black* liquor, and because its name *καπτεν* is derived from *καίω*, to *putrefy*. Respecting the *purifier*, called *πυροσβέτης*, see Potter, i. p. 111.

Come all within the circle. Peace, Aripgrades ^p !
And sit—

[*Here they mimic the ceremonies of lustration.*]

'Tis well. Who wishes ^q now to speak ?

EIGHTH WOMAN.

I, with your leave.

PRAXAGORA.

Bind on the chaplet then,
And may good luck attend you.

EIGHTH WOMAN.

Lo ! 'tis done.

PRAXAGORA.

Now then speak on.

EIGHTH WOMAN.

Speak, said you, what *dry-lipped* ?

PRAXAGORA.

Dry-lipped, she says !

EIGHTH WOMAN.

Why am I *crowned* ^r then ?

PRAXAGORA.

Silence, I say ; forsooth, a pretty thing,
If thou had'st spoken thus in the Assembly.

^p The character of Aripgrades, whom the poet ridicules by supposing him seated among the women, and *out-talking* even *them*, may be seen in the *Knights*, 1281, and the *Wasps*, 1280.

^q Τις ἀγορεύειν βούλειται ; the usual question put by the χίρυνξ in the Assembly.

^r The ancients, as is well known, wore chaplets when carousing. See Horace i. ode xxxviii.

EIGHTH WOMAN.

What harm ? don't *men* in the Assembly drink ?

PRAXAGORA.

Again she talks of drink !

EIGHTH WOMAN.

I do, by Dian ;

What's more, I say they drink right freely too.
Read but the acts they pass, and soon you'll see,
That these same lawgivers were in their cups ;
Ay, and they pour libations : think you *these*
Of *water* are ? or that the Gods they honour
With generous wine, nor take the juice *themselves* ?
Like tavern-tiplers too, they brawl, and then,
Those who outroar the rest in drunken clamour,
The officers ' are fain to carry out.

PRAXAGORA.

Silence ! and take your seat, you worthless thing.

EIGHTH WOMAN (*retiring.*)

By Jove, 'twere better beardless to have been,
Than wearing thus a beard, to choke with thirst.

PRAXAGORA.

Who else may wish to speak ?

NINTH WOMAN.

With deference *I*.

PRAXAGORA.

Crown thee then quickly, there's no time for loitering ;
Lean on your staff in fitting attitude,
Speak out, and let your tone be firm and manly.

* *Tektirai*, called also *enidai*, from their nation.

NINTH WOMAN.

" I could have wished, that one of more experience
 " Had ta'en the arduous task of speech ; while *I*
 " Had been a listener only ; yet *my* voice,
 " Though feeble, shall be ever raised to check
 " Abuse ; I therefore move an act be passed,
 " That vintners, henceforth keeping tanks of *water*
 " Upon their premises, be subject to
 " A penalty ; 'tis a most shameful practice,
 " I swear, so help me the twain Goddesses ' ! "

PRAXAGORA.

Hah ! *the twain Goddesses* ! thy wits are wandering.

NINTH WOMAN.

My *wits* ! how so ? I did not ask for drink.

PRAXAGORA.

No ; but you swore by the *twain Goddesses*,
 Being yourself a *man* ; 'tis pity, for,
 In other points, your speech was quite a pattern.

NINTH WOMAN.

By Phœbus, but you're right !

PRAXAGORA.

So please you, peace.
 The business of the "*House*" shall not proceed,
 Until these blunders first be duly righted.

' Ceres and Proserpine, a woman's form of swearing among
 the Greeks. To expose the tippling propensities of the Athenian
 women, the Poet, in the *Lysistrata*, makes them propose as a
 form of swearing, never to mingle *water* with their *wine*.

ὀμόσωμεν ἐς τὴν κύλικα μὴ πικρῇ ὕδατος. *Lysistr.* 198.

NINTH WOMAN.

Nay, let me once more take the crown, and speak,
I'll not again be tripping caught, I warrant.

“ Ye *Dames*, whom I behold in council met. . . . ”

PRAXAGORA.

Dames ! why, thou lackbrain, thou'rt addressing *men*.

NINTH WOMAN.

Then be the blame upon Epigonus^a ;
So like a woman *he*, that faith I thought
Th' Assembly was composed of nought but *women*.

PRAXAGORA.

Enough of this, so peace, and sit you down ;
It seems that *I myself* must take the crown,
And speak for all. But first, I pray the Gods
To guide my counsels to a prosperous issue.
“ My Lords, the weal of this our native land
“ To *all* is dear, nor is it less to *me* ;
“ Much then I grieve to view our state's condition.
“ Seek you the evil's root ? a single word
“ Comprises it, 'tis *mal-administration*^{*} ;

^a Epigonus, an effeminate character of the day.

^{*} Some lines from the *Frogs* may serve as a comment upon this speech.

I often have observed our state to act
Towards our good and worthless citizens,
In the same manner as of late she did
By our old monies and this modern coinage.
—— of our citizens, the best approved
For lib'ral sentiments, and blameless manners,
For public justice, and for private worth,

" For to *one* day of skilful government,
 " *Ten* there succeed of rank misrule. You'll say,
 " Commit the helm to other hands : what then ?
 " The chances are, we lose by the exchange ;
 " Advice boots little, and the task is thankless,
 " To counsel men, who in their wayward humour
 " Look with distrust upon their benefactors,
 " And meanly crouch to those who wish them evil.
 " There was a time when we ne'er called *Assemblies*,
 " And held Agyrrius to be a villain ;
 " But now that they're in vogue, *he* who receives
 " His obols, lauds the custom to the skies ;
 " *They* who get *nought*, swear that whoe'er attends
 " The Court for lucre's sake, deserves to *die*."

FIRST WOMAN (*interrupting her.*)

By Venus ! what a flow of eloquence !

PRAXAGORA.

Venus ! thou silly wench ! a pretty joke
 I' faith, had this escaped thee in th' Assembly.

FIRST WOMAN.

There I had been more guarded.

PRAXAGORA.

Be so *here*.

" Then this confederacy ' ye so desired,

No longer we employ, but rather use
 The basest wretches, foreigners and slaves,
 Or infamous themselves, or sprung from those,
 Who ever have been held so. *Dunster.*

' Petitus assigns the 4th year of the 96th Ol. as the date of this Play, and the great Panathenæan festival as the time of its

“ (And upon forming which the state’s salvation
 “ Depended, as ye said,) no sooner was it
 “ Concluded, than ye were in dudgeon, and
 “ He who advised the measure, was compelled
 “ To fly. What then, ye ask, were best to do?
 “ To man a fleet, the *poor* man says; but straight
 “ The *rich* and *landowners* cry out against it.
 “ With them of Corinth ye are angry, but

performance; which he does on the following grounds. The historian Philochorus states the alliance between the Athenians, Bœotians, Argives, and Corinthians (against Lacedæmon) to have taken place two years previous to the production of the *Ecclesiastusæ*; and from Diodorus we learn, that the alliance was entered into in the second year of the 96th Ol. in the Archonship of Diophantus. In the following year, Diodorus tells us, the Corinthians became lukewarm, and the allies suffered a defeat, which circumstances are glanced at by the Poet in l. 200, *Κορινθίοις ἄχθοισθε*. The great Panathenæan festival took place in the month Hecatombæon, and to the custom of carrying green boughs on that occasion, allusion is made in line 774. *Κίμνιζε, τοὺς θαλλοὺς καὶ καθίστη πλησίον*. Again, in ver. 18, 59, Minerva’s feast *Σκιρροφορία* is mentioned as having lately taken place, which agrees with the date assigned, inasmuch as it was celebrated on the 12th day of Scirrophorion, which immediately preceded Hecatombæon. Lastly, in Hecatombæon, the festival *Μετοικισία* was celebrated, at which time the sojourners paid an annual tribute, and were in the habit of changing their houses; for which reason, in line 784, the Second Burgher is made to ask the other, whether he is going to *flit*.

—— *Τί τὰ σκινάρια ταυτὶ βούλῃται*

Πότερον μετοικιζόμενος ἐξηνόχῃς

Λύτα; —

- “ They now are staunch ; be ye too staunch to them.
 “ What though the Argives in the mass are dull,
 “ Hieronymus * has skill, and he’s an Argive.
 “ By Thrasybulus’ fostering hand revived,
 “ Safety began to raise her drooping head ;
 “ *Him* why not call then to the helm of state ?”

FIRST WOMAN (*interrupting her.*)

Gods! what a clever fellow!

PRAXAGORA.

You’re improving.

- But to return. “ Within yourselves, Athenians,
 “ The mischief dwells ; diverted from its course,
 “ The public wealth flows into *private* coffers ;
 “ Each has an eye to *self* alone, mean time
 “ The state, like Æsimus †, *gets lamely on*.
 “ Such is the aspect of affairs ; give heed,
 “ However, and I’ll point a way of safety yet ;
 “ ’Tis that we put the *women* at the helm
 “ Of government ; to them we trust our homes,
 “ Why not then trust to *them* the Commonwealth ?”

SECOND WOMAN.

Well said ! by Jove, well said ! right excellent!

PRAXAGORA (*continuing.*)

- “ How far to be preferred to *ours* the ways
 “ Of *women* are, I’ll briefly state. First then,
 “ After the good old custom, one and all

* Left by Conon in command of the fleet, while he himself went to seek an interview with the Persian king. *Bergler*.

† Æsimus, a lame fellow. The original is, Τὸ δὲ κοινὸν ὅστις Ἀἴσιμος κυλίδεται.

- “ Their woollen garments in *warm* water wash ;
“ (You ne’er find *women* fond of change; O had
“ Our state but held this rule, instead of ever
“ Grasping at some new scheme, some untried
“ project,
“ What city could have vied with glorious Athens?)
“ Bread they bake, seated as of olden time ;
“ And as of old bear burthens on their *head* ;
“ They worship Ceres, as of olden time ;
“ And as of olden time they make their cakes ;
“ They beat their husbands, as of olden time ;
“ And as of olden time gallants they harbour ;
“ They please their palates, as of olden time ;
“ And as of olden time they love good liquor ;
“ And last, not least, among their many virtues,
“ Still as of old, have—*melting hearts for all*.
“ Such are the women, and to them befits it,
“ That we the *men* resign the helm of state,
“ Asking no idle questions, as, What course
“ Of policy they will pursue ; but simply
“ Investing them at once with sovereign power.
“ For their good conduct, be our guarantee
“ Nought else save *this*, that, being *mothers*, they
“ Will seek their *children’s* good ; for who more
“ anxious
“ Than the fond parent to protect her nursling ?
“ Then for the *ways and means*, say who’re more
“ skilled
“ Than women ? they too are such arch *deceivers*,
“ That, when in power, they ne’er will be *deceived*.

“ More needs not ; only follow this good counsel,
 “ And soon ye’ll see th’ Athenian state will flourish.”

FIRST WOMAN.

The very cream of speaking, my Praxagora ;
 Prythee impart the source of all this wisdom.

PRAXAGORA.

What time, within the walls, from dread^a of war,
 We refuge sought, I and my husband lodged
 I’ the Pnyx^b ; I often heard the orators,
 And from a list’ner have become a speaker.

FIRST WOMAN.

Not ill bestowed on thee was skill and talent ;
 Pledge but thyself that *deeds* shall follow *words*,
 And on the spot we women will elect thee
 Our mouthpiece and our leader. Tell me though,
 If in the court that harbinger of ill,
 Cephalus^c, insult thee, how wilt then retort ?

PRAXAGORA.

I’ll call him *fool*.

FIRST WOMAN.

The world knows that already.

PRAXAGORA.

I’ll say he’s *mad*.

^a *Ταῖς Φυγαῖς*, at the time of the Peloponnesian war. See Thucyd. b. ii. ch. 171.

^b Near the citadel ; one of the places in which the public Assemblies met. See Robinson, *Ant. of Greece*, p. 49.

^c According to the Scholiast, he was some demagogue, or mob-orator. Cephalus being the son of a *potter*, the poet avails himself of the word *κεραμίστης*, to introduce one of his favourite *puns*.

FIRST WOMAN.

This too they know ; what next ?

PRAXAGORA.

I'll taunt him with his scurvy birth, and say,
 " Though clumsily he turn the *potter's wheel*,
 " Right cleverly he turns the *wheels of state*."

FIRST WOMAN.

What if the blear-eyed Neoclides^d jeer thee ?

PRAXAGORA.

I'll bid him count the hairs on a dog's tail.

FIRST WOMAN.

But if they rudely jostle you ?

PRAXAGORA.

Why marry,
 They'll find that I can jostle them in turn.

FIRST WOMAN.

I'll put but one more case : suppose the officers
 Lay hands upon you, what then will you do ?

PRAXAGORA, (*suiving the action to the words.*)

What will I do ? why stand akimbo thus ;
 No man, I warrant me, shall grasp my middle.

FIRST WOMAN.

We'll to the rescue, if they dare to seize you.

SECOND WOMAN (*with great gravity.*)

Thus far has prudence waited on our counsels.

^d See the *Plutus*, l. 666. In rendering the task assigned to Neoclides, the translator has not been strictly literal ; it is, however, not a whit less difficult for a blind man to execute, than the one given in the original.

Resolve me this though ; how shall we remember,
That in th' Assembly 'tis our *hands**, not *legs*,
We're to hold up ?

PRAXAGORA.

Truly, a stubborn task
For memory ! yet must you give your votes
Thus, with bare arm upraised, no otherwise.
But come, let each truss up her coats, and quickly
Bind on the Spartan sandals, as the men
Are wont, when going abroad, or to th' Assembly ;
This done, clap on your beards, then over all
Fling knowingly your husbands' cloaks, (the same
Ye filched the morn,) grasp each your walking staves,
Then forward, and like sturdy villagers,
Troll as you go some rustic roundelay.

SECOND WOMAN (*to those next her.*)

Well said ; take we the lead then, for, methinks,
Full many others soon we shall encounter,
From different quarters, flocking to the Pnyx.

PRAXAGORA.

By all means make good speed, remembering, that
Who gets not to the Pnyx at earliest dawn,
Must home again return without a *doit*.

[*Praxagora having marshalled her troop, they
put themselves in motion, singing.*]

CHORUS.

Time now 'tis, my merry *men*, time now for us to start,

* The common mode of voting was by raising the arm, called
χεῖρωνία.

That we are *men* repeating oft, lest we belie our part.
 Not slight would be the peril, if any prying eyes,
 In secret while we plot, should pierce through our
 disguise.

Then on, my merry *men*, for the *Council* let us start.

For the Archon ^f has sworn,
 That unless before morn
 Arrived each voter shall be ;
 Used on garlic to feed,
 Stern ^g, and dusty with speed,
 He shall ne'er get his obols ^h three.

So Drace, away,
 Smicythis, no delay,
 Haste we on at the top of our speed ;
 Through this critical day,
 Our parts well to play,
 Befits us take special good heed.

^f In the original, ὁ ἀρχομήτης. Vide Robinson's *Ant. of Greece*, p. 31.

^g βλέπων ὑπὲρ τιμῆμα, " *looking like pungent sauce.*" Elsewhere he says, βλέπων νέαν, " *looking mustard.*"

^h The obolus, originally given to those who came early to the Assembly, was at the instance of one Agyrrius increased to *three obols*, about fourpence English money. This trifling recompence formed an annual expenditure to the state of 150 talents, for the number of judges amounted to about 6000. See Robinson, p. 64.

When received is your pay,
 Sit in close-packed array,
 Prepared each to stand forth the defender ;
 Of rights *female*ⁱ to-day,
Female rights, did I say ?
 I mean those of our *masculine* gender.

But come hasten we on,
 Yon disorderly throng,
 To outstrip from the citadel trooping ;
 All greedy are they,
 And like fowl birds of prey,
 On a carcass who wish to be stooping.

Time was when content
 With *one obol* they went,
 And sat them down cheerful and quiet ;
 Sad now is the change,
 For they up and down range,
 And in court create nothing but riot.

When good Myronides^k
 Was our Archon, then these
 Their traffic had plied all in vain ;
 Of olives a store
 In his wallet each bore,
 Nor served the Republic for gain.

ⁱ In the original, τὰς ἡμετέρας φίλας.

καίτοι τί λόγῳ, φίλους ;

^k Myronides. See Thucyd. b. i. ch. 108.

But now the vile crew,
 With *pelf* ever in view,
 Must have their *three* obols a day ;
 And, like hod-bearers vile,
 Ne'er think it worth while
 To work for the state, save for *pay*.
[*Exeunt singing.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The scene is in the same suburb, in a retired spot, near the house of Blephyrus, who is seen coming forward wearing a pair of high-heeled woman's boots, and a scanty petticoat of bright yellow.

BLEPHYRUS.

What means this ? whither can this wife of mine
 Have vanish'd ? morning breaks apace, and yet
 She does not come. By griping colic racked,
 Long time I lay, then groped amid the darkness
 For shoes and cloak, but all in vain ; at last
 I pounce^m on madam's under petticoatⁿ,
 Drag on as best I could her Persian slippers,
 And now have sallied forth to seek relief.
 Ass that I was, in mine old age to think
 Of wedlock ! and the ass's portion, *drubbing*,
 Were rightly mine. Plague on my gadding yokemate,

^m The *ἡμιδιπλοῖδιον* and *πρεκατιδίον* seem to be the same ; viz. a woman's vest or under garment of a light red colour. *Gray*. The *Περσικαὶ* were ladies' shoes of a white colour, which the Poet, in line 367, makes synonymous with *κοθύβριοι*, or buskins.

She's severat some prank, and gives me—gripes again!

[*Here Blephyrus retires to the side.*]

CITIZEN (*entering.*)

Whom have we here? Is't Blephyrus, my neighbour?

By Jove, the man himself! Prythee, good gossip,

Whence comes it that you look so very *yellow*?

BLEPHYRUS.

'Tis my wife's petticoat, of saffron die,

Thou see'st.

CITIZEN.

Where's then thy cloak?

BLEPHYRUS.

Faith! I can't tell;

For it, I bed and bed-room searched in vain.

CITIZEN.

But why not ask your dame where she had laid it?

BLEPHYRUS.

By Jove! no dame was there to ask; for as

The mouse doth play when sleeps the cat, so *she*

Hath crept away—I fear me for no good.

CITIZEN.

We're both, by Neptune, in the self-same plight;

My “better half” has vanished too, and filched

My cloak and shoes; at least they're not forthcoming.

BLEPHYRUS.

By Bacchus! ay, and my Laconian shoes

Were missing, so I've borrowed madam's buskins.

CITIZEN.

What can it be! can she have gone to breakfast

With any neighbour?

BLEPHYRUS.

Nothing worse, I *hope* ;
 For give the jade her due, she'd scarcely play
 Me false, I think.

CITIZEN.

Well, I must now be moving
 To the Assembly, if my cloak I find.

BLEPHYRUS.

And so must I, when the vile colic lets me ;
 Plague on the *Acrid*-pear that did the mischief !

CITIZEN (*going out.*)

Was it of that same sort which gave the quinzzy
 To Thrasybulus " once ?

BLEPHYRUS.

It was, by Bacchus !
Pears were the *fruitful* cause of ill to *both*,
 But most to *me* : how henceforth shall I venture
 To eat and drink, digestion standing still ?
 So strongly is this *Acrid-usian* °
 Entrench'd, that to dislodge him seems almost
 A hopeless task. Yet call me quick some aid.
Who in the medicining art ranks highest ?
 There's Amynon ; but no, he will not come.

▪ Thrasybulus had promised to speak against the Lacedæmonians ; persuaded by a bribe, however, he pretended to be labouring under a quinzzy, brought on by eating *wild-pears*. *Scholiast.*

° From the word ἀχρεῖς, (a wild pear,) the poet, for the sake of punning, forms a *Gentile* name, and calls it in this line, ἄνθρωπος Ἀχρεαδούριος.

Then fetch Antisthenes, and bid him haste
 With all th' appliances of art ; he's of
 A costive habit, and can feel for those
 I' the same predicament. And thou, Lucina,
 Who o'er the pangs of travail dost preside,
 To *me* extend thy help, lest I become
 A ribald jest for some vile comedy !

SCENE II.

CHREMES (*entering.*)

What hails my friend ? he seems to be in labour.

BLEPHYRUS.

And a hard time he's had, but now 'tis over.

CHREMES.

What means this woman's garb ?

BLEPHYRUS.

Why, in the dark
 I took the first that came to hand : but *you*,
 Whence come you ?

CHREMES.

From th' Assembly.

BLEPHYRUS.

What, is't over

Already then ?

CHREMES.

Ay, long since, and rare sport
 Had we, at seeing the defaulters chased,
 And marked with the vermillion ^P cord.

^P *Μίλτος*. See Potter, v. i. pag. 110.

BLEPHYRUS.

But tell me,

Got you your obols ?

CHREMES.

Would I had ! Alas !

I came too late, and to my shame have brought
My wallet back as empty as it went.

BLEPHYRUS.

The cause of this ?

CHREMES.

There came a throng of men
(The like was never seen) into the Pnyx ;
Pale-faced were they, like in-door artizans,
And filled the whole Assembly, which, forsooth,
Shewed like a moving mass of white ; so I
And many more got nothing.

BLEPHYRUS.

If then *I* go,

Shan't I receive my obols ?

CHREMES.

Now ? good fellow !

Why no, nor even hadst thou been there when
The second cock crew.

BLEPHYRUS.

The measure of my woe
Is full ! O pity me, Antilochus ;
Unhappy [†] am I to have lost my obols,
But more unhappy to survive the loss !

[†] These two verses are parodied from the *Myrmidons* of Æschylus.

But prythee tell me, what at early dawn
Brought such a full attendance ?

CHREMES.

Why, the subject
Chosen by the Prytanes for debate, “ *How best*
“ *To save the sinking state.*” Foremost to speak
Crawled forth the blear-eyed Neoclides ; instant
There rose a general buz of indignation ;
“ What, such a wretch dare play the orator,
“ And think to *save* the state, who could not *save*
“ His own poor eyesight ?” he looked round, and
muttered,
“ What would ye’ve had me do ?”

BLEPHYRUS.

Had *I* been present,
I would have given him a rare specific ;
“ Take garlic, fig-juice, and Laconian spurge,
“ Compound a liniment thereof, to be
“ Applied at bed-time.”

CHREMES.

After him arose
Evæon, a right subtle orator,
(So tattered was this worthy’s garb, that he
To most men’s eyes seem’d naked, but himself
Stoutly maintained he *had* a garment on,)
Then cunningly he tuned his words to please
The public ear ! “ Good citizens, ye see
“ One, who himself necessitous, (for not
“ Four *staters* ^r has he,) yet can frame a plan

^r The *stater* was worth about 2s. 7d.

" Shall save our state. It is then my opinion
 " Ye should enact a law, that in the winter,
 " All clothiers be compelled to *give* a cloak
 " To such as cannot purchase one—for this
 " Will save us many a cold and pleurisy.
 " Next, that whoe'er has neither bed nor bedding,
 " Have a night's lodging at the fripperer's *gratis*,
 " (Provided he be sweet and clean ;) the penalty,
 " If any fripperer shut his door against
 " The houseless, to be, three good fleecy blankets."

BLEPHYRUS.

By Bacchus ! palatable counsel that ;
 And that the motion might be carried, this
 Alone was wanting ; " That each mealman shall
 " Provide the needy with three pounds of flour
 " Whereon to sup, or take the consequence."

CHREMES.

Well, next advanced a fair and comely youth
 (Not unlike *Nicias* *) to address the people.
He strove to prove, the only course of safety
 Was, that the *women* take the reins of state.
 From all the pale-faced faction there were heard
 Shouts of applause, at these their spokesman's words;
 While from the sturdy burghers, cries as loud
 Of disapproval rose.

BLEPHYRUS.

And with good reason.

* According to Palmerius, this was the grandson of the Athenian general of that name.

CHREMES.

It bootéd not, *they* were cried down, while *he*
 To a still louder pitch his voice then raised,
 And heaped all praise upon the *women*, but
 On *thee* most foul abuse.

BLEPHYRUS.

I pray, repeat it.

CHREMES.

First, thou'rt a *villain*.

BLEPHYRUS.

Well, and what of *thee*?

CHREMES.

We'll speak of that anon. Well, next he said,
 Thou'rt a most *arrant thief*.

BLEPHYRUS.

What, I alone?

CHREMES.

And, to crown all, a *rank informer* ¹.

BLEPHYRUS.

What!

All this of *me alone*?

CHREMES.

Nay, for thy comfort,
 He said the same of all the *men*.

BLEPHYRUS (*aside*.)

None, I'll

Be sworn, dared say he lied.

¹ For the character of the *informer*, or *sycophant*, see
 Mitford, vol. v. p. 27.

CHREMES.

Then for the *women* :

They *, the sole fountain-heads of all true wisdom,
 And of political economy,
 First-rate professors, and observers strict
 Of *secresy* ; for when did woman e'er
 Divulge the mysteries of Ceres, while
 With *men*, state secrets always are in danger.

BLEPHYRUS (*aside.*)

By Hermes ! but this last was truly spoken.

CHREMES.

Then too of generosity and honour,
 The very souls were they ; they'd lend each other
 Gold, silver, clothes, and plate, nor of the loan
 Need witnesses, ay, and return the same
 With all good faith, while oft we *men* are wont
 To *borrow*, that we may defraud the *lender*.

BLEPHYRUS (*aside.*)

Ay, in the very teeth of witnesses.

CHREMES.

They scorn to play the vile informer's part,
 Are not litigious, ne'er oppress the people ;—

* An English writer is equally high flown in praise of the sex.

What *she* wills to do or say,
 Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best ;
 All higher knowledge in *her presence* falls
 Degraded. Wisdom in discourse with her
 Loses discountenanc'd, and like folly shews ;
 Authority and reason on her wait.

Nor was this all ; on other points he made
The *women* subjects of his panegyric.

BLEPHYRUS.

Well, what decreed the public voice ?

CHREMES.

T' invest

The women with the powers of government ;
For 'mong the many changes * which our city

* The following extract from Mr. Mitchell's translation of the *Knights*, may serve as a comment upon the Poet's stroke of satire upon his countrymen relative to the many changes in their government. Speaking of the dialogue between Nicias and Demosthenes, Mr. Mitchell says, " The whole dialogue is a bitter satire upon the deterioration of the Athenian democracy, since the death of Pericles, whose successors in administration had been a *lint-seller*, Eucrates ; a *sheep-seller*, Lysicles ; and a *leather-seller*, Cleon.

DEMOSTHENES.

First, says my oracle,

There shall arise within our state a *lint-seller*,
And to his hands the state shall be committed.

NICIAS.

One seller note we ; good, proceed. What follows ?

DEMOSTHENES.

Him shall a *sheep-seller* succeed.

NICIAS.

A brace

Of sellers, good ; what shall befall this worthy ?

DEMOSTHENES.

—— 'Tis fixed that he bear sway till one arise
More wicked than himself ; that moment seals him.
Then comes the Paphlagonian, the *hide-seller*,
The man of claws, whose voice outroars Cycloborus.

D

Has oft experienced, this alone, it seems,
Remained untried.

BLEPHYRUS.

Mean you, 'tis thus decreed ?

CHREMES.

I do.

BLEPHYRUS.

And that to women are transferred
All powers, which lately centred in the men ?

CHREMES.

Again I answer, Yes.

NICIAS.

The man of sheep then falls before the lord
Of hides ?

DEMOSTHENES.

E'en so, thus runs the oracle.

NICIAS.

Another and another still succeeds,
And all are sellers ! sure the race must be
Extinct !

DEMOSTHENES.

One yet is left, whose craft may stir
Your wonder.

NICIAS.

What his name ?

DEMOSTHENES.

Wouldst learn ?

NICIAS.

Ay, marry.

DEMOSTHENES.

I give it *thee* then : the man that ruins
The Paphlagonian is—a *sausage-seller*."

BLEPHYRUS.

What ! shall my *wife*,
Not *I*, sit on the bench?

CHREMES.

Ay, marry ! shall she,
And at home also, keep thy keys and coffers.

BLEPHYRUS.

No more then need I sigh for break of day,
When the court meets !

CHREMES.

No, friend, it is thy wife's
Turn now ; but still the privilege is thine,
To groan and grumble to thy heart's content.

BLEPHYRUS.

Another grievance too, for us poor devils.
Suppose, that, holding now the reins of power,
The women force us, e'en against our wills,
To——

CHREMES.

Do, I prythee, what ?

BLEPHYRUS.

Why, man, whate'er
They list.

CHREMES.

Ay, but suppose we can't, what then ?

BLEPHYRUS.

What ? why no dinner shall we get.

CHREMES.

Then, gossip,
Keep in thy wife's good graces, wer't for nought

But stomach's sake.

BLEPHYRUS.

Ay, but compulsion's odious.

CHREMES.

True, but if this may benefit our city,
Behoves it every man to yield obedience ;
Think on that adage of the olden time,
" Whate'er of ill advised our councils have,
" Some power² aye guides them to a happy issue."
And that the maxim be not now belied,
May Pallas grant, and all our guardian gods !
But I must hence : farewell. [Exit.]

BLEPHYRUS.

Farewell, my Chremes.

[*Blephyrus enters his own house.*]

SCENE III.

The persons composing the Chorus enter pell-mell, looking to the right and left, as though in fear of pursuit.

CHORUS.

Friends and gossips, let us hasten, nor loiter nor delay,
Perchance some crafty man may choose to dog us
on our way ;
Look out in front and flank, direct your glance both
far and near,
Lest the foe espy our march, and attack us in the rear.

² A similar passage occurs in the *Clouds*, l. 588.

φασὶ γὰρ δυσβουλίας

τῆς τῇ πόλει προσϋναι· ταῦτα μίνοι τοὺς θεοὺς
ἄττ' ἂν ὑμεῖς ἔχαμάρτητ' ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον τρίπυν.

Let our footsteps as we go tramp heavy on the ground,
Like those of sturdy rustics from the city homeward
bound.

Bethink ye what disgrace is ours, if ought now bring
disclosure,

And then be doubly on your guard to ward off such
exposure.

Yet faster urge we on our steps, we now are near the
spot,

Where the moon beheld us muster to execute our plot.
Lo! yonder stands the mansion, where dwells our
Leader bold,

By whose good skill it is that we the reins of power hold.
Now no longer needs delay, so retire we one and all,
Within the friendly shade of yon projecting wall.

Once more, now here now there, glance each with
watchful eyes,

Then quick as thought let one and all strip off their
quaint disguise,

Resume their sex's nature, and again its proper grace,
(By this vast bush of beard obscur'd,) restore each
to her face;

For hither comes our Leader, with full many in her train,
Who already have equipped them in their female
garb again.

SCENE IV.

Enter Praxagora and other women, no longer disguised as men. She addresses the Chorus with a triumphant air.

PRAXAGORA.

Thus far success has crowned our enterprise.
 Now quick, before some prying eye observe us,
 Fling each aside this masquerading dress,
 Cloaks, shoes, Laconian sandals, staves, throw all
 Away: you, dame, assist the others, since
 Your task is done. Meantime I'll get me in
 On tiptoe, and, before the goodman spy me,
 Restore the suit which I this morning borrowed.

[Here ensues a grand scene of disrobing; shoes, sticks, cloaks, &c. &c. are seen flying in all directions. This done, the Chorus address their Leader.]

CHORUS.

Lo! thy bidding have we done, and now 'tisthine to say,
 In what befits us next, thy will and pleasure to obey;
 Our service shall be prompt, for by all it is confessed,
 That of equal skill to thine, was woman ne'er possessed.

PRAXAGORA.

Till hither I again return, then deign awhile to wait,
 My friends approved, and soon to be my "counsellors of state;"
 Since prompt of speech, and bold of heart, you've shewn yourselves to-day,
 'Tis mine, with fitting guerdon, your devotion to repay.
[Exit Praxagora.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Scene is on the outside of Blephyrus's house. As Praxagora is about to enter, he suddenly comes out.

BLEPHYRUS.

Whence come you, wife of mine?

PRAXAGORA.

Imports it thee

To know?

BLEPHYRUS.

Imports it me? a pretty question!

PRAXAGORA.

Mayhap you think I come from a gallant?

BLEPHYRUS.

From *two* belike, not *one*.

PRAXAGORA.

Well, man, 'tis easy

To resolve the doubt.

BLEPHYRUS.

How, prythee?

PRAXAGORA.

Smells my hair

Of perfume?

BLEPHYRUS.

What of that? would'st thou persuade me,
A woman ne'er intrigues, save when she's per-
fumed?

PRAXAGORA.

Such is the rule with *me*.

BLEPHYRUS.

But to the point.

Wherefore didst steal away at early dawn,
And take my cloak?

PRAXAGORA.

A friend and gossip, seized
I' the night with pains of labour, sent for me.

BLEPHYRUS.

Then why not tell me, e'er you went away?

PRAXAGORA.

What! would'st have had me disregard the prayer
Of one in childbirth?

BLEPHYRUS.

Had'st informed me first,
All had been well, but—there's been mischief here.

PRAXAGORA.

By the twain Goddesses, I'm innocent!
I rose from bed, and went there straightway, for
Her urgent prayer was, that I speed would use.

BLEPHYRUS.

Why not content thee with thine own clothes then?
But no, forsooth, thou needs must take *my* cloak,
Replace it by a flimsy petticoat,
Then leave me there, extended like a corpse,
Saving the funeral crown*, and cruse of oil.

PRAXAGORA.

'Twas cold, and I, being weak and delicate,

* It was customary to crown the dead with a chaplet of flowers, and to place beside them a cruse of oil to feed the funeral lamp.

Borrowed thy cloak to fence the morning air ;
 But then, my dear, I left thee well wrapped up,
 And snug beneath the blankets.

BLEPHYRUS.

Wherefore take then
 My walking staff, and my Laconian shoes ?

PRAXAGORA.

The cloak to guard, I e'en made bold to don
 Thy shoes, like thee too, shuffling as I went,
 And striking with my staff the pebble stones.

BLEPHYRUS.

Through *thee* I've lost a pint and half of barley,
 Which else I had brought home from the Assembly.

PRAXAGORA.

Nay, think not on't, she's got a chopping boy.

BLEPHYRUS.

Who's got a boy, th' *Assembly* ?

PRAXAGORA.

No, *the woman*.

But, prythee, *has* th' Assembly met to-day ?

BLEPHYRUS.

Ay has it ; why, I told thee yesterday,
 The Prytanes had so ordained it.

PRAXAGORA.

True,

I do remember now.

BLEPHYRUS.

Thou know'st not then
 The sage decree they've passed ?

PRAXAGORA.

Marry, not I.

BLEPHYRUS.

Henceforth^b great joy is thine, for 'tis decreed,
They say, to make the *women* overseers.

PRAXAGORA.

Of what, the woollen manufacture?

BLEPHYRUS.

No,

The *state*.

PRAXAGORA.

Ay, and of what department, prythee?

BLEPHYRUS.

Of each and every one, without reserve.

PRAXAGORA.

By Venus then, henceforth right prosperous will
Our city be.

^b Literally, sit down and take your fill of *cuttle-fish*. Le Fevre here observes, he would rather swallow a piece of *leather breeches* than a slice of *cuttle*. The Greeks thought differently, as may be seen from the following passage of Athenæus.

COOK.

What are your cuttle-fish to-day?

FISHMONGER.

Three for a drachma.

COOK.

Good; I'll take a few then;

The fins shall be cut off, and boiled, the rest,
Divided into squares, and duly sprinkled
With salt, while supper's going on, I'll fry,
Then straightway from the fire, when hissing hot,
I'll bear them in upon the pan.

BLEPHYRUS.

Why so?

PRAXAGORA.

“For many reasons.

“ First, she’ll no longer be the prey of bold

“ Bad men ; we’ll tolerate no perjurers,

“ No vile informers.”

BLEPHYRUS.

Say not so, good wife ;

These very trades gain *me* a livelihood.

* A passage occurs in the second part of Henry VI. much in the same vein.

GEORGE BEVIS.

I tell thee, Jack Cade, the clothier, means to dress the Commonwealth, and turn it, and set a new nap upon it.

JOHN HOLLAND.

So had he need, for ’tis threadbare.

[*Enter CADE.*]

Be brave then, for your captain is brave, and vows reformation. There shall be in England, seven half-penny loaves sold for a penny : the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops ; and I will make it felony to drink small beer : all the realm shall be in common, and in Cheapside shall my palfrey go to grass. And when I am King, (as King I will be)—

ALL.

God save your majesty !

CADE.

I thank you good people—there shall be no money ; all shall eat and drink on my score ; and I will apparel them all in one livery, that they may agree like brothers, and worship me their lord. *Act iv. Sc. 2.*

PRAXAGORA.

Good fellow, peace, and let thy wife proceed.

“ No petty larceny, no envious grudging,

“ No rags or tatters, want, or poverty,

“ No defamation, no distraint for debt.”

BLEPHYRUS.

Grand promises, if they but come to pass !

PRAXAGORA.

Whate'er I say I'll bring to pass, and all I here defy,

In this my new plan of “ *reform* ” a single flaw to spy.

CHORUS.

Now befits thee to unfold,

Skilful plan and counsel bold ;

Now for friends and commonweal,

To display how great thy zeal.

Be thine the task, with eloquence

Of speech, to charm the list'ning sense,

To cheer the mind, and to the heart

The hope of better days impart ;

For time it is some dextrous hand

Should heal the wounds of this our land.

Accomplish then the sage intent,

And strain thy genius to invent

Some novel scheme, which ne'er has been

Before by man, or heard, or seen ;

For our good city, be it told,

Dislikes whate'er is tried and old.

But come, at once disclose thy plan, nor longer use
delay,

Since thus we best shall please the kind spectators
of our play.

PRAXAGORA.

How wise my scheme I'm well aware, but then
perhaps the nation,
To ancient laws attached, may dread *Reform* and
innovation.

BLEPHYRUS.

Nay, if *reforming* be your aim, right boldly may you
speak,
For *novelty*^d has charms for us, we hate whate'er's
antique.

PRAXAGORA (*with gravity*.)

Let me then, I pray, bespeak your silence and at-
tention,
Until to each is manifest the depth of my invention.
To *me*, now friends and citizens, it seems but just
and fair,
That of this life's good things you all should have
an equal share ;
Wherefore should *one* in ample^e wealth and luxury
abound,
When oft another in the depth of penury is found?

^d To the love of *novelty*, for which the "sovereign people" were conspicuous, we find many allusions in Aristophanes and other writers. Demosthenes says, 'Ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐδὲν ποιοῦντες ἰνθάδῃ καθήμιθα, μίλλοντες αἱ καὶ ψηφίζομενοι καὶ πυνθανόμενοι κατὰ τὴν ἀγορᾶν, εἰ τί λέγεται νώτερον; St. Luke also observes, Acts xvii 21. 'Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ πάντες καὶ οἱ ἐπιδημοῦντες ξένοι, εἰς οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἐνκαίρουν, ἢ λέγειν τὶ καὶ ἀκούειν καινότερον.

^e The usual topic of mob-orators in all ages, in order to excite the *poor* against the *rich*.

And while *one* man has broad domains, and fertile
acres owns,

Why wants another space of ground wherein to lay
his bones ?

Why too of slaves should *this* presume to feed a
lengthened train,

While *that* man cannot e'en afford *one* lackey to
maintain.

These all are foul abuses, and justice doth proclaim,
That all things be in common ¹, and our style of life
the same.

BLEPHYRUS.

How, prythee ?

PRAXAGORA.

Stop thy mouth with dung.

BLEPHYRUS.

Shall *dung* then, I beseech,
Be common too ?

PRAXAGORA.

No, fool, but peace, nor interrupt my speech.

¹ In the course of this dialogue, a few passages are cited from Taylor's translation of Plato's *Republic*, as being those against which the Poet more especially directs his ridicule. "The community then of women and children, among our auxiliaries, has appeared to us to be the cause of the greatest good to the city. And surely we agree at least with what went before, for we somewhere said, that they ought neither to have houses of their own, nor lands, nor any possession, but, receiving their subsistence from others, as a reward for their guardianship, they should all spend it in common." *Plato's Rep.* Taylor's translation, p. 303.

First then, of all the property which every man has got,
Together when collected, I would make one common
lot ;

From that fund we the women will, like provident
trustees,

Apportion out to each enough for comfort and for ease.

BLEPHYRUS.

But what, I pray, wilt do with those, who, though no
land they hold,

Keep treasured up a secret store of silver and of gold?

PRAXAGORA.

To render in a true account on oath shall they be made,
The penalty if perjured found

BLEPHYRUS.

Pshaw ! perjury is their trade,
From this grew all their riches ; then suppose you
they'd be loath
Again, if need require, to take a solemn and—false
oath ?

PRAXAGORA.

But this would nought avail them.

BLEPHYRUS.

I pray expound the cause.

PRAXAGORA.

'Tis *poverty* makes men forswear ; but under our
new laws,
When each may have for asking, clothes, chaplets*,
wine, and food,

* The eatables specified in the original are *bread*, pudding,
chick-peas, and salt fish ; the last was consumed at Athens in
great quantities.

Thus to defraud the common fund, would do no
earthly good.

BLEPHYRUS.

Yet oft the greatest rogues are those, in wealth who
most abound.

PRAXAGORA.

I grant you that in former days the case has so been
found ;

But *when* all things shall common be, (as I observed
before,)

'Twould no advantage be to them, to cheat the
general store.

BLEPHYRUS.

But we'll suppose some buxom lass a man should
chance espy,

Will the *general* purse supply a sum, with which
her charms to buy ?

PRAXAGORA.

No need to *buy*, since *gratis* he may take her to his
arms ;

My law enacts, that women lend to all alike their
charms.

BLEPHYRUS.

But if *all* upon the *prettiest* wench their choice
should fix, who knows

That this will not give ample scope for fisty-cuffs
and blows ?

PRAXAGORA.

'Gainst this contingency, as is fit, the law doth thus
provide,

“ The handsome and the ugly shall be seated side
by side ;
“ Whoe’er then to the pretty wench would fain pay
his addresses,
“ Must first on the ill-favoured one bestow some
kind caresses.”

BLEPHYRUS.

So much attention to bestow upon an ugly wench,
The love which for the comely one, before we felt,
will quench
In us old men.

PRAXAGORA.

No matter that, they covet not the charms
Which lie—

BLEPHYRUS.

Where, prythee ?

PRAXAGORA.

Where ? why in a wrinkled dotard’s arms.

BLEPHYRUS.

By Jove ! a lawgiver profound, and fit to rule the state ;
Full well have you provided that no *maid* shall want
a *mate*.

Now kindly for us men contrive some saving clause,
I pray,
Since women always fly the *old*, and seek the young
and gay.

PRAXAGORA.

I will ; for if a frisky lass a wooing wish to go,
She on the old and ugly first her favours must bestow.

BLEPHYRUS.

Then Lysicrates^b, the bottle-nosed, will meet as good
 success,
 Among the *fair*, as any one?

PRAXAGORA.

By great Apollo, yes :
 And oft the sturdy rustic shall elbow out the fop,
 With, " Sir, I am your senior, till I'm served you'll
 please to stop."

BLEPHYRUS.

But, prythee, how shall each man tell what *bantlings*ⁱ
 are his own,
 In such a state of things?

PRAXAGORA.

Wherefore needs it to be known?
 As *sires*, the children shall be taught to honour and
 revere
 All older than themselves.

BLEPHYRUS.

Well-a-day, now much I fear,

^b Lysicrates seems to have been remarkable on the same
 account as Juvenal's cobbler of Beneventum, and Shakespeare's
 Bardolph.

ⁱ " But how shall fathers and daughters, and those other
 relations you now mentioned, be known of one another? They
 shall not be known at all, said I: but from the day on which
 any one is a bridegroom, whatever children are born in the 10th
 or 7th month after it, *all these* he shall call, the *male* his *sons*,
 and the *female* his *daughters*, and they shall call *him* *father*."
 Taylor's transl. p. 300.

Lest for *stranglings* this uncertainty afford a tempting
cloak :

For since *wittingly* the son his dad is often known
to choke,

Each youngster now, who feels inclined, the liberty
will take

Of throttling us old men—then say, “ ’twas done
through *pure mistake*.”

PRAXAGORA.

If e’er in former times a son t’assault his father chose,
To a jelly he might beat him, yet none would interpose;
But now self-preservation’s ^k law will bid each dad
unite,

At need, the graceless varlet to chastise with main
and might.

BLEPHYRUS.

Thus far your words of wisdom smack; yet think
what a disgrace,

If the rakehell Epicurus ¹ call me *father* to my face?

PRAXAGORA.

A mischance might you befall far worse than even this.

^k “ The elder shall be enjoined both to govern and to chastise the younger; and surely the younger, as becomes them, shall never attempt to beat the elder, or in any other way to offer violence to him; for there are sufficient guardians to hinder it, both *fear*, and *reverence*: *reverence*, on the one hand, restraining them from assaulting, as it were, their parents; and *fear*, on the other, lest others shall assist the sufferer, some as *sons*, others as *brothers*, and others as *fathers*.” Taylor’s transl. p. 304.

¹ Epicurus and Aristyllus were worthies of the same stamp; “ Arcades ambo,” “ *blackguards both*,” as Byron has it.

BLEPHYRUS.

Ay, what ?

PRAXAGORA.

If Aristippus call you dad, and then a kiss
Impart.

BLEPHYRUS.

I'd shake the stinkard off, and pound his carcase well.

PRAXAGORA.

And pretty strongly afterwards of *calamint*^m you'd
smell.

But since long before the passing of this our new decree,
The nasty hound was whelp'd, he ne'er can fix his
birth on *thee* ;

So fear not thou the dire mishap.

BLEPHYRUS.

A worse could ne'er befall.

But, prythee, to another point your notice let me call ;
On whom henceforth will fall the task our land to
cultivate ?

PRAXAGORA.

Our slaves ; while thou'lt have nought to do but
watch the dial plate.

When the shadow's' ten feet long, then quickly be
it thine,

^m Calamint, or mountain mint, used as perfume by women.
The Scholiast calls it, *Δυσόδης βοτάνη ἢ ὀφύς ἐλαίῳ καίεται*.

^r Supper was the principal meal with the Athenians ; they usually went to the bath before supper, especially when they ate *from home*. The ordinary hour of supper was, according to Aristophanes, when the shadow on the dial was 10 feet long ;

Bathed, perfumed, and anointed, at supper to recline.

BLEPHYRUS.

And how shall we a method find our wardrobes to
repair?

PRAXAGORA.

When your present suits are worn, 'twill be the
women's care

A fresh supply to weave.

BLEPHYRUS.

Yet one more doubt resolve, I pray ;
If any man be fined, say how the money shall he pay?
Not surely from the *public* fund?

PRAXAGORA.

Suits' and fines there will be none.

from whence we may infer, that the dials were horizontal, with upright gnomons, denoting the hours by the intersection of the umbral line, with the sun's place marked in the zodiac of the dial. Note in Tooke's translation of Lucian.

"But what? shall lawsuits and accusations against one another be banished from among them, so to speak, by their possessing nothing as private property but their body, and every thing else being common, from whence they shall be liberated from all those disturbances which men raise about money, children, and relations? They *will* of necessity be liberated from these." Taylor's translation, page 305.

In the second part of Henry VI. Jack Cade is no less sweeping in his measures against the legal profession.

DICK THE BUTCHER.

The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers.

CADE.

Nay, that I mean to do. Is not this a lamentable thing, that

BLEPHYRUS.

No suits? how many then will be clean ruined and
undone!

PRAXAGORA.

No otherwise though will it be, for when was law
e'er found

Of any good productive?

BLEPHYRUS.

Nay, examples do abound.

First, if any man owe money, and refuse to pay the debt.

PRAXAGORA.

How, prythee, could his *creditor* the means of
lending get?

For all things being common, one source alone is left,
From whence a *loan* to furnish, no less than down-
right *theft*.

BLEPHYRUS.

But if a drunken man be sued for battery and assault,
Whence the fine shall he discharge? (I think I
have you now at fault.)

PRAXAGORA.

His *belly*^t shall by abstinence from food discharge
the fine,

of the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment?
that parchment, being scribbled o'er, should undo a man? Some
say, the *bee* stings; but I say, 'tis the bee's *wax*; for I did but
seal once to a thing, and I was never mine own man since.
Act iv. sc. 2.

^t This mode of punishment was adopted at Lacedæmon, where
it was customary to eat together in public.

Not to do the like in future, this will teach him, I opine.

BLEPHYRUS.

And will there be no *thieving*?

PRAXAGORA.

Why where would be the gain,
To steal by *cunning* that which each for *asking* may
obtain?

BLEPHYRUS.

Will there danger be o' nights from footpads as
before?

PRAXAGORA.

Not the slightest, if"—at *home* you stay, and firmly
bolt your door;—
Nor much e'en if abroad; but if "*your coat, Sir, or
your life,*"
Some cut-purse thunder in your ears, why then
without more strife,
Deliver up your *coat* at once—what matters it to *you*,
Since by asking at the *public store*, you'll get a suit
bran new?

BLEPHYRUS.

Will dice be still in vogue?

PRAXAGORA.

There'll be no stake for which to game.

BLEPHYRUS.

And what will be our mode of life?

* One of the jokes *παρὰ πρῶτον*, by surprise, which are so frequent in Aristophanes.

PRAXAGORA.

To all alike the *same* ;
 One single spacious dwelling-house our city shall
 be made ;
 The party-walls shall levelled be with matlock and
 with spade ;
 Ingress and egress shall be free.

BLEPHYRUS.

And *where* shall we sup now ?

PRAXAGORA.

The *courts*^v of law and *porticoes* will serve for that,
 I trow.

BLEPHYRUS.

To what purpose shall the *bema*^w be next applied,
 I pray?

PRAXAGORA.

It shall bear our cups and pitchers, and besides in
 turn array,
 Fair youths shall stand upon't, and thence in lofty
 verse,
 The deeds of all the valorous at supper time re-
 hearse ;
 So if cowards should be present, they will not dare
 to stay,
 But supperless for very shame shall quickly slink
 away.

^v Στρατὶ were porticoes filled with ἱεῖς, and seats on the side,
 fitted for study and discourse, and in which it is probable the
 scholars met. Robinson's Ant. p. 10.

^w Elsewhere called λήρις : see line 62.

BLEPHYRUS.

A quaint decree, by Jove, to bring on cowardice
disgrace ;
But where may't fitting seem the *urns*^x of *lottery* to
place?

PRAXAGORA.

I' the Forum, by the statue of Harmodius the re-
nowned,
There shall each draw forth his lot^y, where engraven
shall be found
The initials of the chamber, to which if he repair,
Reclining at his ease, he may take his evening fare.
If a *Kappa* should befall, let him quickly go to *Kings* ;
If a *Theta*, then to *Theseus* ; but if chance a
Beta brings,
Let him hie to *Baker's hall*

BLEPHYRUS.

What, to *bag*^z the loaves and flour ?

PRAXAGORA.

No, fool, but with good appetite his supper to devour.

^x Urns, into which were thrown the lots, at the election of Judges. See Suidas on the word *κλαροτήρια*.

^y The courts of justice were *ten* ; they were all painted with colours, from which names were given them. See Potter, i. p. 128.

The Translator has taken the liberty of changing the position of two of the *letters* here specified, in order to make them correspond with the *initial* of the English word.

^z For the sake of a pun, the Poet makes Praxagora tell those who draw a *Κάππα*, to go to Baker's hall Why? says Chremes ; *ὅτι κλέπτειν* ; to steal?

BLEPHYRUS.

Suppose to draw a *blank* should be some hapless
fellow's lot,
Chapfallen must he homeward trudge, all supper-
less, or not ?

PRAXAGORA.

Not so ; none debarred shall be,
From festive mirth and revelry ;
Joy unmixed shall hold his reign,
While each the mantling bowl shall drain ;
Till at length, with wine elate,
Torch in hand^a, and reeling gait,
Wreathed his brow with flow'rets gay,
Homeward each shall take his way ;
Then from corner, street, and alley,
Quick shall maid and matron sally ;
Each some reveller's arm shall seize,
With accents soft and bland like these ;
“ Handsome stranger ! come with *me*,
“ When a damsel thou shalt see,
“ Passing fair, whose beauteous face,
“ Radiant is with every grace.”
Then a second shall exclaim ;
“ Heed not, youth, that artful dame ;
“ Follow where *I* lead the way,
“ And enraptured thou shalt say,
“ That for charms of form and feature,

^a Revellers, as is well known, carried a torch and chaplet.
See the *Plutus*, 1040.

“ Such an all-bewitching creature,
 “ As by *me* shall quick be shewn,
 “ Was ne’er by thee or seen or known.”
 “ Lead,” he cries, “ I’ll follow after ;”
 But both dames exclaim with laughter,
 “ Nay, gallant, but hurry not,
 “ May it please you, you’ve forgot,
 “ That on *us* you must bestow
 “ A share of love before you go.”
 Then some ugly one-eyed fellow,
 Coming up with liquor mellow,
 Roughly thrusts the youth away,
 With, “ Keep your distance, coxcomb, pray ;
 “ These tricky dames must go with *me* ;
 “ Learn to respect the law’s decree,
 “ Which doth empower the blind and humpy,
 “ The lame, the flatnosed, and the stumpy,
 “ First fruits to claim of woman’s charms,
 “ Before she court another’s arms.
 “ Now, ladies, if you please, we’ll go,
 “ And, youngster, you will next time know,
 “ That ’tis against the law to burn
 “ With love, until it is your *turn*.”

These specimens how like you, of our skill in legislation ?

BLEPHYRUS.

Unqualified applause do they deserve, and approbation.

PRAXAGORA (*with dignity*.)

Behoves it that, in virtue of my office,

Preceded by some shrill-voiced female herald,
 I go into the Forum, to receive
 All goods and monies, which from private coffers
 Will now pour in, to swell the public fund,
 Also t' arrange our *public feasts*, which are
 To date commencement from to-day.

BLEPHYRUS.

What, will

To-day behold us banqueting in public ?

PRAXAGORA (*with gravity.*)

This very day. First though must I take measures,
 All street-walkers^c and harlots to suppress ;
 Not *one* shall ply her trade.

BLEPHYRUS.

And pray why not ?

^c BIRON.

[Reads.] Item, *That no woman shall come within a mile of
 my court—*

And hath this been proclaimed ?

LONGUEVILLE.

Four days ago.

BIRON.

Let's see the penalty.

[Reads.]—*On pain of losing her tongue.—*

Who devis'd this ?

LONGUEVILLE.

Marry, that did I.

BIRON.

Sweet Lord, and why ?

LONGUEVILLE.

To fright them hence with that dread penalty.

Love's Labour Lost.

PRAXAGORA.

Marry ! 'tis plain : that in our arms the sweets
 Of love, our youthful citizens may taste ;
 Not sap their goodly strength at venal shrines.
 No longer shall the freeborn dame of Athens,
 By dressed and painted slaves, be of her loves
 Defrauded. Must *they* love ? let them consort
 With *slaves*, the fittest mates for such as *they*.

BLEPHYRUS.

Now onward, and I'll follow close at hand,
 Rivet the public eye, and earn respect,
 As husband of our " Lady-President." [Exeunt.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Scene is in an open place in Athens; the First Burgher, assisted by his slaves, is seen bringing out of the house his goods and chattels, which he arranges on the ground, in the order of a procession.

FIRST BURGHER.

To the Forum^d now, my household stuff to take :
 First though will we bring out, and overhaul,
 Each separate article. Foremost in rank,
 Come forth my pet-of-pets, my *bolting sieve*,
 And " *basket-bearer*" be ; thy services

^d Here the First Burgher is introduced, bringing out and arranging all his goods and chattels, addressing each by name, and assigning it a proper place and title, as if to take part in the Panathenæan festival ; for the description of which, see Potter, i. p 482.

Have earned the honour well, for many a sack
 Of meal thou'st sifted for me in thy time.
 Do *thou* enact the part of "*litter-bearer*,"
 Good *porridge-pot*; sooty thy hue, by Pluto!
 Nor blacker could it be, e'en had'st thou served
 To boil the dye, with which Lysicrates^e
 His grizzled locks is wont to stain. Do *you*
 Advance and stand behind him, *crisping-irons*^f;
 Thou "*water-bearer*," take thy station here,
 And bring thy ewer. Thou too, "*chanticleer*,"
 Who oft hast roused me with thy matin strain
 From slumbers sweet, and made me haste, while yet
 The morn was grey and chill, unto th' Assembly.
 Ho! there within, the *skeps*^g and honey-combs
 Bring forth; range duly next the *olive-branches*;
 Lastly, the *tripods*, and the *cruse of oil*.
 The *pipkins*, and such small fry, you may leave.

SECOND BURGHER (*enters, grumbling to himself.*)

What! give my worldly goods up? When I do,
 Then let them call me beetle-headed fool.
 By Neptune, never, till I've scrutinized
 This same decree *myself*: without good cause,
 Be sure, I'll not consent to cast away
 The fruits of all my sweat and toil, till first
 I've satisfied my mind on every point.

^e Lysicrates, mentioned above in line 661 of the original.

^f *Καυμάτρια* is the word in the Greek, signifying a "tire-woman."

^g In the original, *κυάφη*, which, according to Le Fèvre, signifies a bee hive.

But, lo ! what have we here ? and what may mean
 This goodly shew of chattels ? Friend, art going
 To *flit*, or has distraint for rent compelled thee
 To put thy property in pawn ?

FIRST BURGHER.

Nay, neither.

SECOND BURGHER.

Why then thus range in line your pots and pans ?
 Mayhap you mean to send a solemn pomp
 To Hiero, the auctioneer^h.

FIRST BURGHER.

Not so ;

My purpose is to send them to the Forum,
 To be surrendered, as the law directs.

SECOND BURGHER.

Art sober, man, or jesting ?

FIRST BURGHER.

What I say,

I mean.

SECOND BURGHER.

Then, by protecting Jove, I swear,
 Thou art a fool !

FIRST BURGHER.

And, prythee, why ?

SECOND BURGHER.

A most

Egregious fool !

FIRST BURGHER.

Again, I ask you, wherefore ?

^h Hiero was a celebrated auctioneer of the day.

Is't not my duty to obey the laws ?

SECOND BURGHER.

What laws, thou jolt-head ?

FIRST BURGHER.

Why, those last enacted.

SECOND BURGHER.

Enacted ! heard you ere the like ? thou dolt !

FIRST BURGHER.

Dolt, say you ?

SECOND BURGHER.

Ay, and very mooncalf too !

FIRST BURGHER.

Marry ! because I reverence the laws ?

Behoves it not the prudent man to do so ?

SECOND BURGHER.

For *prudent* man, read *blockhead*.

FIRST BURGHER.

Wilt not *thou* then

Comply with this decree ?

SECOND BURGHER.

I' faith, not I,

Before I learn what says the general voice.

FIRST BURGHER.

Nought else but this, that one and all are ready

To pay obedience.

SECOND BURGHER.

Let me *see* them *do* so,

Then, I'll believe.

FIRST BURGHER.

Nay, but they *say* as much,

In every street and lane.

SECOND BURGHER.

Of course they *say* so.

FIRST BURGHER.

What's more, the burdens on their backs they've
lifted,

And *talk* of starting instantly.

SECOND BURGHER.

No doubt,

They *talk* of doing so.

FIRST BURGHER.

Plague take thee now,

For disbelieving, what—

SECOND BURGHER.

All disbelieve.

FIRST BURGHER.

The foul fiend seize—

SECOND BURGHER.

On all such fools as *thou*.

Dost think that any, having one half grain
Of sense, will render up their goods? Why, man,
At Athens 'tis the mode to *take*, not *give*.

The statues of the gods can teach you better ;
For when we pray them all good things to send us,
How stand they ? why e'en thus, with outstretched
palm,

As ready not to *give*, but to *receive*¹.

¹ Le Fevre here remarks, that in some religious ceremonies it was customary to put money into the *hands* of the statues of the gods.

FIRST BURGHER.

Avaunt ! thou evil counsellor, and let
Me do what's fitting. Plague on't, where's my cord?

SECOND BURGHER.

What, still resolved ?

FIRST BURGHER.

So help me, Jove ; in proof
Of which, I'll bind these tripods twain together.

SECOND BURGHER.

Fool ! not to wait at least, and see what *others*
Do, and e'en then not to—

FIRST BURGHER.

Do what, I pray ?

SECOND BURGHER.

What ? why, still temporize, and still delay.

FIRST BURGHER.

In hope of what ?

SECOND BURGHER.

Thou lackbrain ! why, mayhap
An earthquake ^k may befall, and topple down
Our roofs, a baleful meteor shine aloft,
Or weazel dart across the Forum, then
Farewell obedience to this new decree !

FIRST BURGHER.

What, if I wait so long, that they refuse
To take my goods ?

SECOND BURGHER.

What, if thou giv'st them up,

^k Respecting these prodigies, see Potter, i. p. 111.

And ne'er canst get them back again ? fear not,
They'll take them gladly, e'en at the month's end.

FIRST BURGHER.

How so ?

SECOND BURGHER.

Full well I know our citizens,
Ready to pass decrees to-day, and just
As ready to resist them on the morrow.

FIRST BURGHER.

With this they *will* comply.

SECOND BURGHER.

Suppose they dont !

FIRST BURGHER.

Pshaw ! man, I say they *will*.

SECOND BURGHER.

But I repeat,

Suppose they don't ?

FIRST BURGHER.

I will by force of fists

Compel them.

SECOND BURGHER.

What if thou art worsted ?

FIRST BURGHER.

Why,

Run for my life, and leave both bag and baggage.

SECOND BURGHER.

And if they bring thy baggage to *the hammer* ?

FIRST BURGHER.

May *bursting* be thy death !

SECOND BURGHER.

And if I burst ?

FIRST BURGHER.

'Twould be good riddance.

SECOND BURGHER.

A truce to jests, and say,
Art thus resolved ?

FIRST BURGHER.

The more so, that I see
Some neighbours there, already on their way.

SECOND BURGHER (*sarcastically.*)

Antisthenes^k belike ? beshrew me, but
I think the task were easier, to relax
His costive body, than his niggard soul.

FIRST BURGHER.

Pshaw !

SECOND BURGHER.

Haply you think to see Callimachus^l,
The chorus-master, or the spendthrift Callias,
Contribute? [*aside*] fool, to waste thy substance thus!

FIRST BURGHER.

What bald, disjointed talk is this !

SECOND BURGHER.

How so ?

Does not each day behold decrees enacted,

^k Antisthenes, mentioned above, line 387.

^l Callimachus, noted for his poverty. Callias, a spendthrift, who to avoid beggary put an end to his own life. See Ælian, Var. Hist. iv. 23.

And then as soon annulled? Dost not remember
That ^m which was passed, the price of salt to lower!

FIRST BURGHER.

True, I remember that.

SECOND BURGHER.

And then another,
Which ordered that a *brazen* ⁿ coinage should
Be issued from the mint?

FIRST BURGHER.

Bad luck to me
Did that same coinage bring, for having sold
A store of grapes, and crammed my cheek^o with brass,
I hied me to the market, to buy meal;
When, lo! just as my bag was being filled,
Up comes the crier, to make proclamation,
“That henceforth nought but *silver* do pass current.”

SECOND BURGHER.

And lately, when Euripides proposed
The tax ^p of two per cent, which was to produce

^m A decree to lower the price of salt, which was almost immediately annulled, by the passing of another.

ⁿ In the Archonship of Callias. See the *Frogs*, 735.

^o Allusion to the Athenian custom of carrying money in the mouth occurs in the *Birds*, where Euelpides, speaking of prostrating himself (as was usual) at sight of a kite, says,

By Bacchus, that prostration

Cost me a penny once, when I my humble adoration
Offer'd at sight of a noble kite; for as I lay supine,

With mouth agape, unwares I gulp'd, and swallow'd down the
coin.

Carey.

^p This decree was, that every one should contribute to the

Five hundred talents to the state's exchequer,
 Did not all men swear by him? did not all,
 Declare him worthy of a golden statue?
 But mark, no sooner had the scheme been tried,
 And proved a failure¹, than the very men,
 But just before agog for *gilding* him,
 Were eager to bespatter him with mud.

FIRST BURGHER.

Things are now changed, my friend; we *men* were then
 In office, now the *women* take the helm.

SECOND BURGHER.

Befits us then to keep a sharp look out,
 By Neptune, lest they *swamp*² the bark of state.

FIRST BURGHER.

As usual, thou'rt in jesting mood; but come,
 Take up your burden³, slaves, and follow me.

service of the state the fortieth part of his property; in other words, it was a "property tax."

¹ Literally, had proved *Διὸς Κλέϊντος*, *Jove's Corinth*; on which passage, Dunster has this note in his translation of the *Frogs*. "A name which the Corinthians affected to give their city, and which they frequently repeated with much haughtiness, in their altercations with their neighbours, the Megareans, but who afterwards went to war with them, defeated them, and threatened to destroy *Jove's Corinth*. It seems to have been applied proverbially to things of a trifling nature, which people treated as matters of great importance, and about which they were perpetually talking."

² The very appropriate oath, *By Neptune*, may suggest to the reader the fear intimated in the original.

³ In the Greek *φίεσι ἀνέφερον*, the *yoke* such as is now used for carrying pails or buckets.

SCENE II.

Enter a Female Crier.

O yes! O yes! hereby do I give notice,
 That every citizen straightway repair
 Unto our Lady-President, to draw
 The lot, which shall assign where each shall sup.
 The tables are already laid, and groan
 'Neath ample piles of every savoury viand;
 Couches are set, luxuriously bespread
 With tapestry and skins; while ranged in order
 Stand goblets, brimming with their perfumed liquor;
 Slices of fish are simmering in the pan,
 Prime hares are roasting, and rich omelets frying,
 Chaplets are weaving, and choice sweetmeats baking,
 While pots of pease-soup bubble o'er the fire.
 There, 'mid the throng of cooks and kitchen wenches,
Smoius is seen, in knightly guise arrayed,
 Playing the scullion, and the dishes washing.
 Geron is there, and saunters up and down,
 Not clad in sorry cloak and rustic shoon,
 But pranked in doublet trim, and dancing pumps^t,
 Laughing and chuckling with another youngster.
 Speed ye, since dish in hand the sewer^u waits,
 And bring along with ye sharp appetites!

SECOND BURGHER.

Then here go *I*, for 'twould be downright treason,
 To disobey the state, and lose—a supper.

^t *Κοιτις*, a thin shoe, generally worn within doors.

^u "The sewer," in the Greek, *ὁ τῆς μάλζας φέρον*: *μάλζα* was a cake or pudding, formed of meal, salt, and water.

FIRST BURGHER.

Whither so fast, pray, thou who dost refuse
To aid the common fund?

SECOND BURGHER.

To supper, man.

FIRST BURGHER.

Not if the *women* have their wits about 'em ;
Nor wilt thou get a mouthful, till thou'st given
Thy chattels in.

SECOND BURGHER.

Faith, so I will.

FIRST BURGHER.

But *when*?

SECOND BURGHER.

They shall not have to wait for *me*.

FIRST BURGHER.

What mean'st?

SECOND BURGHER.

That others will be tardier far than I.

FIRST BURGHER.

And thou wilt really in to supper?

SECOND BURGHER.

Doubtless ;

Is't not on all good citizens incumbent,
The state's established customs to uphold?

FIRST BURGHER.

What if they bar thy entrance there?

SECOND BURGHER (*butting*.)

Why then

I'll force my way ram-fashion.

FIRST BURGHER.

Good, but if
They treat thee with a horsewhip?

SECOND BURGHER.

For assault
And battery, I'll summon 'em.

FIRST BURGHER.

But what,
If at thy menaces they laugh and jeer thee?

SECOND BURGHER.

Then standing at the entrance—

FIRST BURGHER.

Thou'lt do what?

SECOND BURGHER.

Seize on the victuals, as they're carried in.

FIRST BURGHER (*going.*)

Good appetite attend thy supper—*when*
Thou gett'st it. Ho! there, slaves, bear on my stuff.

SECOND BURGHER (*bawling after him.*)

Let *me* assist thee, and thus gain admittance.

FIRST BURGHER (*looking back.*)

Nay, nay, good fellow, lest, forsooth, when I
Have given in my goods, thou should'st present
Thyself, and claim them as thy own.

SECOND BURGHER (*solus.*)

Say'st so?

By Jove then, must I cudgel my invention,
And hit upon some cunning scheme, by which
To keep mine own, and yet secure a share
Of this same public banquet, for 'twould not

Be right, while others feast, that *I* should fast.
On then to supper, nor delay we longer. [*Exit.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Scene is a street in Athens; at a window appears a fat old woman, in "flame coloured tuffeta," smeared with paint, and bent on conquest. She sings.

FIRST OLD WOMAN (*affettuosamente.*)

Ah! wherefore from the banquet gay
Wends no reveller yet his way?
Decked in saffron robe I've stood,
Half the day in amorous mood,
Of love-songs singing snatches.
My charms half revealed,
And by paint and by patches
My wrinkles concealed.
Now, Muse, my cause befriending,
Deign on my lips descending,
Thence to draw forth notes that may,
Rival soft Ionia's* lay.

[*Here a young damsel puts her head out of the opposite window, and attacks her antique rival in song.*]

* Upon the line of Horace, "*Motus doceri gaudet Ionicos,*" Francis has the following note. "The Ionians were the most voluptuous people in the world; their music, their dances, and their poetry, were formed into peculiar softness and delicacy. Even their *laughter* had something so dissolute, that 'Ιωνικός γέλως became a proverb."

YOUNG WOMAN (*con spirito.*)

By thus craning your neck out, you cursed old jade,
I warrant you thought to engross all the trade ;
At leisure to pluck the choice fruit you made sure,
And with that treble pipe some gallant to allure.
But I fear not your powers, and, if singing's your will,
I challenge you straight to a trial of skill.

[*To the audience.*]

That the plan you approve, deign spectators to say,
Though the custom be trite, 'twill add zest to our
Play.

OLD WOMAN (*to a flute player.*)

Minstrel ! be no longer mute,
But wake the soft sounds of thy flute,
And as I pour forth my lay,
Do thou a strain accordant play.

(*Sings.*)

Whoe'er desires with eager lip
Of pleasure's honied cup to sip,
O let him seek these arms !
The unexperienced maiden's heart
Nor passion feels, nor can impart,
Nor knows of love the charms !
Whoso blest would wish to be,
Let him then resort to me.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Wrinkled beldame, cavil not
At youthful maiden's happy lot ;
For her it is to fire the heart,
For her it is to heal the smart ;

On her gently-budding breast,
 Love delights to take his rest ;
 While such as *thou*—their wrinkled charms
 Must keep for grisly Pluto's arms !

OLD WOMAN (*con fuoco.*)

Be perdition thy fate !
 And when with thy mate,
 By slumber opprest,
 Thou hast sunk down to rest,
 May the “ *tester* ” give way,
 And o'erwhelm thee, I pray :
 And when to his breast
 Thou may'st wish to be pressed,
 May the folds of an asp
 In his stead round thee clasp !

YOUNG WOMAN (*pietosamente.*)

Thus deserted, and left all forlorn,
 Ah ! how much to be pitied am I,
 For a wooing my mother is gone,
 And in solitude leaves me to sigh ;
 On her own pleasures always intent,
 With a lover provided was *she*,
 Yet a thought ne'er bestowed e'er she went,
 On securing a playmate for *me* !

OLD WOMAN.

A temperament hot
 To have, seems thy lot,
 And to *thee* Lesbian Sappho must yield ;

• Ἐπιλιπτεον. See Le Fevre's note.

Yet vain all thy toil,
 My pleasures to foil,
 For to thee, minx, I'll ne'er quit the field.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Thy long neck, thou old cat, thou may'st crane,
 And stretch thy crack'd pipe till it burst ;
 But thy labour, believe me, is vain,
 For the men will all come to *me* first !

OLD WOMAN.

May they find thee ^{*} a corpse !

YOUNG WOMAN.

Good mother, thanks, but I
 Am blooming, young, and fresh, nor yet intend to die.

OLD WOMAN.

Young and blooming minx !

YOUNG WOMAN.

Aha ! I see the grapes are sour,
 Old as thyself thou'ldst make me, if—it were but
 in thy power.

OLD WOMAN.

What signifies my age ?

YOUNG WOMAN.

Not a jot, but from thy paint
 And cosmetics such an odour comes, as almost
 makes me faint.

OLD WOMAN.

Why bandy words with me ?

^{*} In this passage, the Translator has adopted the sense given
 by Invernizius.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Why out of window gape all day ?

OLD WOMAN.

Epigenes, my darling, I expect to pass this way,
Him in song would fain address.

YOUNG WOMAN.

To ask then I'll make bold,
Admirers hast thou any, saving Geron, bald and old?

OLD WOMAN.

Himself shall soon convince you, e'en now he comes
in sight.

YOUNG WOMAN.

But not in quest, I hope and trust, of such a wrinkled
fright.

OLD WOMAN (*con spirito.*)

Baggage ! soon shalt thou see.

YOUNG WOMAN.

I'll withdraw me, and hide,
The course which he takes shall the question decide.

[*She withdraws.*]

OLD WOMAN.

I too from the window will keep me aloof,
Of my judgment to give satisfactory proof.

[*She withdraws.*]

[*Enter a young man crowned with flowers, bearing a torch.*

He stops under the damsel's window, and sings.]

YOUTH.

Luscious nectar to sip,
From the roseate lip

Of this maiden, how great the delight !

But if I must first
 Court this beldame accurst,
 The penance will kill me outright !
 OLD WOMAN (*peeping from the window.*)
 Repent it I swear
 You shall, if you dare
 With the damsel at all to make free ;
 'Tis^a vain to defy
 The law, so comply,
 And first your "devoirs" do to *me*.

YOUTH.

The feast hath warmed my soul for love,
 Flush'd am I with generous wine ;
 Now, ye gods, propitious prove,
 Grant the damsel may be mine !

YOUNG WOMAN (*peeping in turn.*)
 Now as I'm a maid, the crafty old jade
 Is gone, by my cunning outwitted ;
 'Cause I hid me just now, she imagined, I trow,
 That the window *for good* I had quitted.

OLD WOMAN (*singing sotto voce.*)
 Ah ! 'tis he, the very same,
 That kindled erst my amorous flame !
 Hitherwards direct thy way,
 Fair youth, and deign with me to stay ;
 Those glossy curls of thine impart

^a In the Greek, οὐ τὰν Πραξιγόρας τὰδ' ἰστί. We live under the dominion of Praxagora, a woman of spirit ; not under a Charixene, (a silly, weak woman of that name.)

Tumultuous wishes to my heart,
 And o'er my every feeling
 Is love's soft influence stealing.
 Eros ! blooming and fair,
 List thou to my prayer,
 For this stripling that I,
 In vain, may not sigh !

YOUTH (*continuing to serenade the damsel.*)

^bHither, hither, quick repair,
 Ope the door to me, my fair ;
 Cruel ! if thou dost deny,
 On these rugged stones I'll lie,
 Till at length shall ruthless death
 Claim thy hapless lover's breath.
 Then, sweetest, deign
 To ease my pain,
 And, pillowed on thy breast,
 O let me sink to rest !
 Eros ! blooming and fair,
 List thou to my prayer,
 That this maid all-divine,
 At length may be mine !
 But ah ! the power of words is faint,
 The tumult of my breast to paint ;
 Then ope the door, sweet source of pain,
 Nor let thy lover plead in vain,

^b This was termed by the Greeks *μίλος παρακλαυσίθυρον*, literally, "a mournful love ditty, sung before the door," answering to the modern *serenade*.

But gently to thy bosom press him,
And in thy snowy arms caress him !

O be mine, thou golden toy,
Thou who art the Muse's joy,
Offspring too of Venus fair,
The sister-graces' darling care,
Meet to be a deathless bride,
Witchery personified !

Then ope the door, and fondly press me
To thy bosom, and caress me ;
Thou gav'st the wound whence bleeds my heart,
'Tis thine then, sweet, to heal the smart !

OLD WOMAN (*coming out of her house.*)

Knocked you, prythee, at my door, in quest of *me*?

YOUTH.

Not I.

OLD WOMAN.

Then wherefore give a tap ?

YOUTH.

If I did now, let me die.

OLD WOMAN.

In search of whom then do you come, with torch
thus flaming bright ?

YOUTH.

Of an Anaphlystian burgher.

OLD WOMAN.

How, prythee, is he hight ?

YOUTH.

Ne'er mind, 'tis not Sebinus, that worthy friend of
thine.

OLD WOMAN.

A fico for Sebinus ! if with love, alas ! I pine,
 'Tis for thee, my dainty fellow, and by Venus do I
 swear,
 This very night shalt thou be mine, by foul means
 or by fair. [*She prepares to seize his arm.*]

YOUTH.

Nay, hold ! as in affairs of *law*^c, with you dames of
 threescore,
 We'll deal, and to another time *your* causes must
 stand o'er ;
 Just now there's press of business, since among us
 'tis agreed,
 That the damsels under *twenty* shall first in court
 be heard.

OLD WOMAN.

Such was the case in former times, for ought I know,
 but now,
 We sixty years who number shall precedence take,
 I trow.

YOUTH.

Provided we're *inclined*; for as in playing *chess*^d,

^c " Allusion to the manner of introducing causes into the courts of justice, according to the age of the plaintiffs ; first, those (as I imagine) above 60 years of age, and so downwards. After which, if there were several, they cast lots, whose should be heard first." *Gray*. See also Bergler's note on this passage.

^d The game ~~scrum~~, here rendered *chess*, (whether correctly or not, the Translator cannot venture to determine,) was one of the

We're at liberty to *take*—or *pass* you by, I guess.

OLD WOMAN.

That thus thou wilt not hesitate, and pause, my life
I'll lay,

When called on at the *supper board* a "*knife and
fork*" to play.

YOUTH.

Why waste thy wit? farewell; my business lies that
way.

OLD WOMAN (*seizing him.*)

But first thou'st business *here*, so be pleased awhile
to stay.

games said to have been invented by Palamedes. Subjoined is the note of the French translator, who, after rendering *πτερία* by *jeu de larrons*, says, "Il ne faut pas non plus confondre le jeu des larrons avec celui d'échecs; ce dernier se joue sur un damier devisé en 64 cases, tandis que le premier n'a pas plus de cases qu'il n'y a de lettres dans ce vers heroique, *ἔδρι σοφὸς λιμοῦ μι παρσιφασίην Παλαμίδης*, chaque joueur avoit 5 dames de verre, ou de petites pierres plates (*calculos*) qui se placoient dans 5 cases particulières. La *dame* ou le pion du milieu s'appeloit *ιστὸν γεαμμά*: la table, la planche ou la pierre sur laquelle ce jeu étoit tracé s'appeloit *πίλις*, et les pions *κίπης*. Les pions de chaque adversaire étoient distingués par une couleur differente, et l'art de ce jeu étoit de renfermer *une couleur*, entre deux couleurs semblables. On ne deplacoit pas volontiers, le pion du milieu, et on ne le faisoit q'autant qu'on y étoit contraint *par la plus urgente nécessité*; et c'est probablement à cette loi que fait allusion notre Poete." Theatre des Grecs, 4to. vol. xiii. See also Meursius, on the word *πτερία*.

YOUTH.

Aroynt thee! for I loathe that gross unwieldy paunch*.

OLD WOMAN.

Nay, I know thou lov'st me dearly, so never look
askance;

To find me here ne'er wonder, but come, buss me,
pretty dear.

YOUTH (*contemptuously*.)

Thou battered bit of goods! thy lover's jealousy I
fear.

OLD WOMAN.

What lover dost thou mean?

YOUTH.

He's an artist; in his way,
The very pink of painters.

OLD WOMAN.

And what his name, I pray?

YOUTH.

He daubs sepulchral vases; but in, nor stand a
prating,
For should he spy thee loitering here, thou'lt get a
handsome rating.

* οὐχὶ τὴν κρησίδα αἰτούμεθα. Bergler remarks, that κρησίδα has sometimes the same meaning as τηλία, viz. the hoop of a cask, and refers to the *Plutus*, 1037, where the old woman says, διὰ δακτύλιου μὲν οὖν ἡμεῖς ὦν διακύνσαις, meaning, in Falstaff's phrase, "that she was only an eagle's talon in the waist, and could have crept through an alderman's thumb-ring." Chremylus replies, εἰ τύγχανι γ' ὁ δακτύλιος ὦν τηλία. Ay! marry, if the ring were but an hoop."

OLD WOMAN.

Yes, yes, I see thou'rt trying—

YOUTH.

From thy clutches to get clear.

OLD WOMAN.

By Venus now, to whom is due this lucky chance,

I swear,

I will not quit my prize.

YOUTH.

Hands off! and touch me not again.

OLD WOMAN.

Thou must and shalt comply, so to fume and fret is
vain.

YOUTH (*addressing the audience.*)

Henceforth to draw our buckets up, that we shall
never need,

Or pulley, hook, or rope, by all will be agreed ;

By the heels we'll let this harpy down, and in a
trice our pails

From the well will safe be lifted, clutch'd in her
crooked nails.

OLD WOMAN.

Saucebox ! restrain thy tongue, comply, nor set me
at defiance.

YOUTH.

Against my will nought shall, I vow, exact from me
compliance.

OLD WOMAN (*coaxingly.*)

Your age is that on which I doat, by Venus, then,
you must.

YOUTH.

And *yours* is that precisely, which in me creates
disgust.

OLD WOMAN (*rinforzando.*)

If milder measures fail, I have that which shall
compel thee.

YOUTH.

Then what it is, without delay, good granny, please
to tell me.

OLD WOMAN.

Nothing less than a law, which shall force thee to heed
My lovesick entreaties.

YOUTH.

The document read.

OLD WOMAN (*pulls out a scroll and reads.*)

To the ladies of Athens, who rule o'er the state,
In their wisdom this law it has seemed good to make.

" If an amorous youth by chance cast his eyes
" On a *damsel* of beauty, and covet the prize,
" Ere his wishes be granted, behoves it that he
" The mate of some loving *old woman* shall be ;
" But if to the *damsel* to cleave he shall choose,
" And the *old dame's* embrace contumacious refuse,
" Each and every old woman we hereby empower
" The offender to drag, (e'en from this very hour,)
" By whate'er she thinks fit, be it arm, leg, or hair,
" Until he consent his offence to repair."

[*Seizes him.*]

YOUTH.

If relentless thus you are, and determined not to spare,

That you copy fell *Procrustes*, surely all men will declare.

OLD WOMAN.

Be sure I will; for to the laws obedience must be paid.

YOUTH (*struggling and crying out.*)

What, ho! some friend or tribesman, quickly hasten to my aid!

OLD WOMAN.

In vain thou call'st for rescue, for none will venture near,
'Bout nought, except^f a peck of corn, can *men* now interfere.

YOUTH.

Then will I challenge *essoine*^g.

OLD WOMAN.

No such subterfuge will do.

YOUTH.

I'll feign myself a *merchant*^h.

OLD WOMAN.

The imposture you will rue.

^f "A woman could not deal of her own authority, with any person, for more than the value of a medimnus of corn." *Gray*.

This now of course applied to the *men*, the *women* being at the head of state.

^g *Essoine*, derived from the French *exoine*; an excuse for him that is summoned to appear and answer to an action, or to perform suit to a court baron, by reason of sickness, or other just cause of absence. *Tomline's Law Dictionary*. Chaucer has,

From every work he challenged *essoine*

For contemplation's sake; yet otherwise

His life he led in lawless riotise.

^h On account of the use, of which merchants were to the state, the Athenians exempted them from serving in war.

YOUTH.

What then remains ?

OLD WOMAN.

To follow me.

YOUTH.

What no commiseration ?

So stern of purpose are you ?

OLD WOMAN.

Ay, as Diomede the Thracian.

YOUTH.

Submit if I must then, prepare thee a bed ¹,
First vine branches scatter, and marjoram spread ;
Bind thy brow next with fillets, and then duly place,
On the right and the left, a funereal vase ;
And let fronting the door lustral water^k be set.

OLD WOMAN.

But to buy me a chaplet you surely forget.

YOUTH.

A chaplet of the best is thine, that is, if you survive,
For much I fear, the chamber door thou'lt never
reach alive.

DAMSEL (*suddenly coming out.*)

Whither dragg'st thou this youth? what thy warrant
declare ?

OLD WOMAN.

By right is he mine, a prize lawful and fair.

¹ Apparently yielding, he bids her prepare a couch, not however a *nuptial*, but a *funeral* one, as best suited to her who was
θάνατου μίλημα.

^k To purify those who had been engaged about the corpse. See
Potter, ii. p. 190.

DAMSEL.

Thou drivelling old fool, to imagine that he
Will consort with a vile wrinkled beldame like thee;
Thou look'st, thanks to age and to size, on my life,
Better fitted his *mother* to be, than his *wife*;
If such laws come in force, why in every street,
A Jocasta and Œdipus soon shall we meet.

OLD WOMAN.

'Tis envy that sharpens thy tongue, cursed jade !
But I'll have my revenge. [Exit.]

YOUTH.

For such opportune aid,
In thus setting me free from this plaguy old crone,
No thanks can compensate, fair damsel, I own ;
Not ungrateful I'll prove me, for this very day
Shall shew a good turn, I know how to repay.

SCENE II.

SECOND OLD WOMAN (*comes suddenly on the scene.*)

Thou impudent hussy, to dare lay thy hand
On the stripling, when *I*, by the law of the land,
A prior claim have.

YOUTH.

Now may I straight be hung
For an unlucky dog ! From what hole hast *thou* sprung,
Hag still more accurst ?

SECOND OLD WOMAN.

This way thou'lt be pleased
To follow me, youngster.

YOUTH (*to the damsel.*)

In mercy, thus seized,
And dragged roughly along by this old fury's paw,
Do not cruelly leave me !

SECOND OLD WOMAN.

Peace, fool, 'tis the *law*,
And not *I*, which now drags thee.

YOUTH.

I know it full well,
In sooth, 'tis not *thou*, 'tis a phantom¹ from hell,
Flame-coloured and gory.

SECOND OLD WOMAN (*in a wheedling tone.*)

Come, sweetheart, this way,
Without more ado.

YOUTH.

At least, let me, I pray,
Have a moment or two to myself, for in sooth,
My spirits are fluttered ; nay more, in plain truth,
My bowels just now are so strongly rebelling,
That but for dispatch there is really no telling
What may hap—

SECOND OLD WOMAN.

Courage, man ! and set pain at defiance ;
Quickly into *my* house, and there every appliance
For comfort thou'lt find.

YOUTH.

Nay ; I'll here step aside,
And meantime if it please thee two sureties provide,

¹ *Ἐμπύρην*, a horrible spectre, a copious description of which may be seen in the *Frogs*, 288.

For my due appearance, both “ *good men and true.*”

SECOND OLD WOMAN.

I’ll none of your sureties accept.

THIRD OLD WOMAN (*is heard behind the scenes.*)

Holla! you,

Where so fast with that dame?

YOUTH (*not yet seeing her.*)

I have no other course,

Of *free* will I go not; since she drags me perforce;
But whoever *thou* art, may all blessings attend thee,
Thus in my distress coming up to befriend me.

[*Seeing her.*]

But Pans, Coribants^m, Castor, and Castor’s twin
brother,

What shape meets my view! a hag worse than the
other!

By all that is hideous on earth, or in air,
Thy name, race, and purpose, dread phantom,
declare!

Art some ape daub’d with paint, and trick’d out for
a show,

Or a beldame, sent up from the regions below?

^m The apostrophe, reminds us of Hamlet.

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

Be thou a spirit of health, or *goblin* damn’d,

Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell?

Why the sepulchre

Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,

To cast thee up again? What may *this* mean?

THIRD OLD WOMAN (*second and third old women
here seize his arms.*)

Spare your gibes, if you please, and quick follow this
way.

SECOND OLD WOMAN.

This way, sirrah ! turn, don't you hear what *I* say?

THIRD OLD WOMAN.

This arm I will never release from my grasp.

SECOND OLD WOMAN.

And *this*, with a hold just as firm will *I* clasp.

YOUTH.

Ye will tear me in pieces, ye hags, with your claws!

SECOND OLD WOMAN.

Then by coming with *me* shew respect for the laws.

THIRD OLD WOMAN (*to the other.*)

Thou'st no right to the youth, since more ugly to
view,

In form and in feature, *I* am, dame, than *thou*.

YOUTH.

If thus 'twixt you both you in pieces will tear one,
How, prythee, shall I find my way to you *fair one*?

THIRD OLD WOMAN.

Nought imports *that* to us, so thy duty discharge.

YOUTH.

But which of you soonest will set me at large?

SECOND OLD WOMAN.

That will *I*, so this way come.

YOUTH.

My arm then set free,
Please you, Ma'am, on the right.

THIRD OLD WOMAN.

Sir, this way come with *me*.

YOUTH.

But this other won't let me.

SECOND OLD WOMAN.

By Jupiter ! never

Will *I* leave thee.

THIRD OLD WOMAN.

Nor *I*, but I'll clutch thee for ever.

YOUTH.

If *I* were a vessel, and you were to steer me,
Sorry work would there come on't, before long, I
fear me.

SECOND OLD WOMAN.

And wherefore ?

YOUTH.

Why each takes a different tack,
Ere the harbour was reached, you'd sink the poor smack.

SECOND OLD WOMAN.

A truce to words, come—

THIRD OLD WOMAN.

Sir, with *me*, not with *her*.

YOUTH (*despondingly*.)

A faintness comes o'er me, you urge me in vain,
I can't please you both, unless first split in *twain* ⁿ.

ⁿ “ Divide me like a prize buck, each a haunch.”

Merry Wives of Windsor.

In the original,

Τοῦτ' ἰ τὸ πρᾶγμα κατὰ τὸ Κανόνιον σαφῶς
ἐκφράζεται.

This decree is mentioned in Xenophon's Hellenics, b. i. c. 7.

SECOND OLD WOMAN.

Pshaw, man, some leek pottage° thy strength shall restore.

YOUTH (*they both drag him on.*)

Woe's me! she has got me at last to her door.

THIRD OLD WOMAN (*to the other.*)

Thou think'st to exclude me, but, vixen, thou shan't,
A *third* will I make, and by force—

YOUTH.

Nay, avaunt!

One ill at a time is enough quite to bear.

THIRD OLD WOMAN.

By Hecate! I will though, resist if you dare.

[*Here a violent struggle takes place between the two old women, each trying to exclude the other; at length, both roll head-foremost into the door way. The youth leans despondingly against the door, and addresses the audience.*]

YOUTH.

Now by Jove, the *Preserver*, who ever beheld,

It provided, that where there were many criminals, charged with the same crime, each should be heard in his defence, severally. *Gray*, in his note, gives a different account.

° *Broth*, as a restorative, was in great request among the Greeks. In the *Acharnians*, *Dicæopolis* says,

If too deep our thirst we slake,
And our morning temples ache,
Peace shall medicine us both
With a dish of fragrant *broth*.

Mitchell.

A wight more ill-fated than I, thus compelled
 To remain at the mercy of two ugly crones,
 Whose carcases nought are but parchment and bones!
 Ye gods! the disgrace I can never survive,
 Nor ere from this house shall I come forth alive;
 These parting instructions deign then to receive,
 Spectators, from one, who will soon cease to breathe;
 "Of these hags take the driest, (she'll sooner catch
 fire,)
 "And of her, for my corpse, compose duly a pyre;
 "Let the other with pitch befrom foot daub'd to head,
 "Her legs and her feet too well loaded with lead;
 "This fittingly done, at length shall she grace
 "My sepulchre's top, for a *funeral vase*°."

SCENE III.

*Scene is an open place in Athens; a maid-servant enters
 from the banquet.*

MAID.

Happy is Athens, happy too am I,
 Thrice happy is my mistress, for *she* shares
 The state's authority; so too are ye,
 Our neighbours all, and tribesmen; and again
 Right happy I, though but a humble handmaid!
 'Twas fragrant odour that with which to-day

° Poinsinet, the French translator, observes, that the *action* of the Comedy terminates here; what follows is merely a species of epilogue, or digression.

My hair I essenced, but more fragrant far
 The perfume, which those Thracian casks sent forth.
 Doubt ye my words? does not the generous liquor
 Long time retain its influence on the brain?
 Whereas the *odour*, like a flower that withers,
 Soon flings its sweetness to the passing air.
 Far better then, ye gods, it is to quaff
 The offspring of the grape! so fetch me wine,
 And of the choicest vintage, that throughout
 The livelong night, my soul may swim in gladness.

[*Addressing the Chorus.*]

But tell me, ladies, where I'm like to find
 The goodman of our house, I mean, my master?

CHORUS.

If to stay with us here a short time thou'st a mind,
 Thy master, I think, thou most likely wilt find.

MAID.

Good counsel, faith! for here he comes—to supper.
 O happy, and thrice happy, master, hail!

MASTER (*entering.*)

Happy! what *I*, forsooth!

MAID.

Beyond compare!

For who more fit to claim the name of *happy*,
 Than who of thrice^p ten thousand citizens
 Alone to-night has gone—without his supper.

CHORUS.

The truth of thy words, none I'll swear can refute,

^p The number of citizens was now above 30,000. *Gray.*

Or that happy thy good master's lot is, dispute.

MAID.

Where goest now, master ?

MASTER.

Why, to get some supper.

MAID.

By Venus, now, thou'rt somewhat of the latest !
It matters not, my mistress bade me seek thee,

[*To the Chorus.*]

And at the same time to invite these ladies ;
Of mellow *Chian wine* there's yet good store,
And dainties in abundance—so delay not.

[*To the audience.*]

She bade me say too, that of the spectators,
And critics', should there any be inclined
Our play to favour, and unprejudiced
To pass their judgment, *they* shall welcome be.
I see you doubt me ; and methinks I hear
One say, " the invitation can't extend
" To *all* ;" it does, and I again proclaim,
That all, both old and young, will find their board

' " With the Greeks, a contributor to their scenic exhibitions had two or three distinct sets of enemies to encounter. The *Archon*, (*Frogs*, 94,) with whom lay the power of rejecting the piece in the first instance; the *Audience*, to whom, after permission from the ruling magistrate, it was presented; and, thirdly, the *critical overseers*, (*νεφταί*.) whose business it was, under the restriction of a solemn oath, to adjudge the prize of victory to what they thought the most distinguished of the competing pieces." *Mitchell*.

With supper spread, as soon as—each goes *home*.

[*Exit.*]

CHORUS.

To the banquet I'll hasten, nor longer delay,
But gracefully holding my torch, light the way.

[*To the master.*]

And you, Sir, bestir you, and shew your good
breeding,

To the supper these ladies gallantly by leading.
Meantime, will I raise a strain jovial and gay,
As befits to a banquet guests taking their way.

[*To the audience.*]

Yet to you, ye spectators, a word, with your leave,
Which with due condescension I pray ye receive.
Let such as have come the grave *critic* to play,
Treasure up the *wise maxims* we've uttered to-day ;
While those who like better *broad jests* or a *pun*,
We hope will remember our *wit* and our *fun* ;
Thus the grave and the gay will, I trust, both combine,
To greet with applause this production of mine.
Nor against our success, I pray, let it tell *here*,
That *first** on the stage 'twas our lot to appear.
Let prejudice ne'er o'er your minds have dominion,

* In the dramatic contests, as is well known, several pieces were enacted in succession ; among such a volatile people, therefore, as the Athenians, the merits of the *first* competitors (though perhaps superior) were not unlikely to be thrown into the shade by *him* whose piece was fortunate enough to come on *last* in order.

But on *judgment*, *sound judgment*, be formed your opinion ;

O'er your verdicts let justice impartial bear sway,
Lest those who observe you, ere find cause to say,
"Twixt *these* and vile *harlots* resemblance we find,
"Those who visit them *last*, they alone bear in mind."

[*To the Chorus.*]

But, ladies ! time flies, so with blithe step and gay,
In the measure of Crete, let us trip it away.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Give the word, and off we go,
On the lightly-pointed toe.

CHORUS.

First then, let each damsel slim,
Graceful poise her nether limb ;
Now with fast twinkling feet,
To the music time beat,
And without more delay,
Haste away ! haste away !
For soon^t will appear,

^t Respecting the "bill of fare," which the Poet dispatches in *six lines*, consisting of *one* monstrous compound word, Poinssinet says, "Ce salmis d'expressions n'a pu se rendre en François." And the observation will apply equally to the English language.

In an amusing chapter of that amusing work, Peregrine Pickle, is an account of an entertainment "*in the manner of the ancients*" given by a certain worthy Doctor, equally varied and *recherché*. "At the top was a boiled goose served up in a sauce composed of pepper, lovage, coriander, mint, rue, and anchovies. At each end were dishes of the *salacacabia* of the Romans, one made of parsley, penny-royal, cheese, pinetops, honey, vinegar, brine, eggs,

All sorts of good cheer ;
 Limpets, oysters, salt fish,
 And of skate^a too a dish,
 Lampreys, with the remains
 Of sharp sauce and birds' brains,
 With honey so luscious,
 Plump blackbirds and thrushes,
 Cocks' combs and ring doves,
 Which each epicure loves,
 Also wood-pigeons blue,
 With juicy snipes too,
 And to close all, O rare !

cucumbers, onions, and henlivers. A loin of veal boiled with fennel and caraway seed, on a pottage composed of pickle, oil, honey, and flour, and a curious *hachis* of the liver and blood of a hare. The *salacabilia* being removed, the places were filled with two pies, one of dormice, liquored with syrup of white poppies, the other composed of a hock of pork baked in honey. In the middle smoked a sow's stomach, filled with a composition of minced pork, hog's brains, eggs, pepper, cloves, garlic, aniseed, rue, ginger, oil, wine, and pickle. On the right hand were the teats and belly of a sow just farrowed, fried with sweet wine, oil, flour, lovage, and pepper. On the left hand a fricassee of snails, fed, or rather purged, with milk. At the end, fritters of pompions, lovage, origanum, and oil, and a couple of pullets, roasted and stuffed in the manner of Apicius, the stuffing being a mixture of pepper, lovage, and asafetida."

For the full particulars of the banquet, and the disastrous chances which befell the guests, the reader is referred to ch. 44. of the work itself.

^a Σίλαχες. The Lexicon calls it "*a gristly fish*;" it is therefore here rendered "*skate*," at a venture.

The wings* of jugged hare !

[*The Scene changes, and displays a splendid banqueting room, with numerous tables, crowded with guests.*]

SEMI-CHORUS.

Arrived in the hall, deck'd for feasting and ball,
 Welcome music, song, dance, and enjoyment ;
 Of nought let us think but to eat and to drink,
 And be pleasure our only employment.
 Holla ! youngster, I say, some omelet this way
 Bring, and look you, be speedy in motion ;
 So greedily stuff yonder guests, that enough
 There'll not be for all, I've a notion.
 [*The Chorus here put themselves in fitting attitude,
 with the usual grace of "Figurantes."*]
 Nimble round now pirouette,

* In Horace, Sat. b. i. s. 8. we have,

Et leporum avulsos, ut multo suavius *armos*,
 Quam si cum lumbis quis edit.

The dish rendered "jugged hare," is in the Greek called *λαγω-
 σιγαιο βαρη-τραγανο*, i. e. "hare stewed in new wine, with season-
 ing made of green corn," which Le Fevre terms, "*sauce verte*."
 Respecting this "*sauce verte*," an amusing passage occurs in
 "Rabelais," b. iii. ch. 11. who enumerates no less than 46 good
 effects resulting from the use of it.

"De bled en herbe vous faites belle *sauce verte*, de legère
 concoc tion, defacile digestion, laquelle vous epanouit le cerveau,
 ebaudit les esprits animaux, rejouit la vue, ouvre l'appetit, delecte
 le gont, assure le cœur, chatouille la langue, fait le teint clair,
 fortifie les muscles, tempere le sang, allège le diaphragme,
 rafraichit le foie, desopile la ratelle, soulage les rognons, assouplit
 les reins, degourdet les spondiles, &c. &c. &c.

Faster, faster, faster yet !
 To supper then with joyful cry,
 Our theme, success, and victory !

ἡ δὲ βραβεὶα. The prize of comedy was originally a jar of wine and a basket of figs; but of these we have no intimation, after the first stage in the history of the Drama. In later times, the successful poet was simply rewarded with a wreath of ivy; his name was also proclaimed before the audience; his choragus and performers were adorned in like manner. The poet used also with his actors to sacrifice the *πρωτόν*, and provide an entertainment, to which his friends were invited. *Theatre of the Greeks*, p. 107.

THE END.



